

LEADERSHIP FOR BEGINNING A HOMELESS MINISTRY IN A SMALL
SOUTHERN TOWN

A THESIS

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I dedicate this project to my two beloved editors,
Liz and Cat, who I love very much. Thank you!

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FOREWORD

On a cold, rainy night in the winter of 2004 I was on my way home from choir practice. I crossed over a bridge where the homeless of our community often sought shelter at night. As my car idled at the “Smith Crossroads” (the largest intersection in our small town of Lenoir, North Carolina), I began to reflect on their plight. I was blessed to be going home to a heated brick home. I did not have to be concerned with having food to eat, or worrying about where my next meal would come from. “What would it be like to be sleeping under the bridge tonight?” I wondered. It was then that I recognized God speaking to me saying, “*I have children that will be spending the night underneath that bridge. I would like for you to help them.*” That moment of meeting conversation with God would be the birth of my involvement with ministry to the homeless.

That summer I attended a meeting convened by Rector Ingram Parmley of Saint James Episcopal Church and other community leaders. Since the city had passed an ordinance prohibiting these men from living under the bridge, we all felt we should do something to serve the homeless. Reverend Parmely was retiring and moving out of the community, this meeting would be a “passing of the baton” of leadership for this community problem. Two months later I was asked to chair this effort.

For the next eighteen months, our Caldwell Homeless Shelter Committee had over 25 meetings to plan for and develop a men’s homeless shelter. A core group of eight members were very faithful to attending meetings, visiting other homeless shelters, soliciting support, and prayer. A men’s homeless shelter was in operation as a result of

their efforts from February 2005 – October 2005. Over 100 men were served with an average daily count of twelve people, but the ministry had to close due to a lack of funding, inadequate staffing, and no place to operate the ministry. The history of this ministry shed light into the difficulty of an endeavor such as this.

The committee's first step in addressing the homeless problem in our area was to do our homework. We gathered information and each member of the committee took assignments. We spoke with other community leaders such as the police and various mission organizations in order to explore the need for a homeless ministry. I talked with the former director of the Salvation Army Board of Directors. The Salvation Army had explored this problem from 2000- 2004 and proposed a solution. Their home office would not fund their proposal for a shelter, however, because their study had declared that there was not enough need to support a 20 bed shelter. Consequently, the Salvation Army left.

One local pastor in our group had developed a ministry to address the problem and she wanted us to fully support her and support her congregation's ministry site, Genesis House, for this ministry. Genesis House had opened and closed the previous summer due to improper zoning. The pastor invited our committee to tour the Genesis House before one meeting and several of us did. We declined to endorse the location since it was improperly zoned. We did not feel that the zoning board had been unfair to them.

The next thing we did was to invite two homeless shelter directors to come and share information about their organizations. We wanted to know how they got started and how they did their ministry. In September, Hospitality House director, Jim Thompson

shared in depth how the homeless were served in Boone, North Carolina (a small college town about 45 minutes from Lenoir). In October, Mc Dowell Ministries director, John Thompson, came from Marion, North Carolina. His enthusiasm was evident and his offer to partner and help us give birth to this ministry was inviting. Even though I had concerns, an informal partnership began.

The November meeting seemed to be crucial. The leader of the Genesis House and Mc Dowell Mission were very concerned that the homeless would have to deal with the cold weather of winter soon. An offer to tour the old and vacated Broyhill Furniture offices was made just before Thanksgiving. The renovations needed for occupancy were estimated to be \$200,000. Another tour was offered that day.

Miller Carter, a local Methodist pastor and a member of the Dulatown Board of Directors wanted us to look at another building. Dulatown had purchased an old nursing home building and wanted to start a transitional home for women and children. They were not ready to start their ministry so they offered to let us rent the building from them for the winter. We toured the building and it was a better fit for our needs. It was located four miles from downtown Lenoir in the Bushtown community. It seemed like a good offer. We established a formal partnership with a memorandum of understanding stating the rent fees, financial secretary fees, and other terms of use of their facility. Mc Dowell Mission offered to staff the ministry until we could train and develop our own staff. It seemed almost too good to be true.

With the three organizations working together the Caldwell Homeless Shelter Committee, Mc Dowell Mission, and Dulatown Outreach the Caldwell Homeless Shelter opened on February 28, 2005. A van was available to pick up the homeless in the parking

lot of the police station. No one came that day or on any of the first five days. The van transportation simply wasn't used. Slowly but surely, though, men began to come to the shelter. The homeless population that we had targeted was not the men that came, however. We had designed the shelter for the "chronic homeless", but instead those who were the "transitional homeless" came. They came for a variety of reasons. They had lost their jobs, had just been released from jail, they were stranded in our town, or had recently been released from a treatment center. We even had parents bring their young adult sons that they could not tolerate living under their roofs anymore.

Problems quickly arose. Two weeks into this journey, the staff director from Mc Dowell Mission quit. Apparently he was not as well suited to this leadership as we had been led to believe. Our committee had to make a decision. Did we want to stay open or did we want to close? The six men that were living there certainly did not want to leave. Miller Carter, a member of our board as well as the board of Dulatown, did not want it either. The solution put forward was to let one of the resident men take the lead.

The partnership with Mc Dowell ended that day, and Dulatown began to exert more control over the ministry. In some ways we believed it was crucial to stay open for the continuance of the ministry. We believed that if this shelter closed before a permanent location was found, it would derail the ministry. This belief eventually proved to be true.

The Caldwell Homeless Shelter Committee continued to meet, periodically appearing before the zoning board and the Lenoir city council to continue our conditional residential zoning status. At our monthly meetings we discussed finances, future sites, by-laws, and a variety of problems. The differences of opinion regarding the focus of ministry and the location of the ministry were becoming more apparent.

A decision was made in early October to close the ministry unless we had obtained adequate funding and a good site to do this ministry. When these requirements failed to materialize, the decision was prayerfully made to close the ministry. Financial debts with Dulatown were forgiven in exchange for furniture we donated to their new ministry. There was some discussion of trying to continue and several meetings were held in an effort to explore new ideas, but it was all to no avail. Frustrated with the stagnation of the committee, I gave up my leadership position and eventually the committee dissolved.

As I pondered the possible reasons for the failure of this committee and its efforts, it became apparent that a lack of spiritual direction and Christ-like concern for the homeless was at the heart. Too many of the committee had let personal agendas crowd their passion for the poor. Some of these agendas included the typical “not in my back yard” reasoning, the “this will take money that should be going to my designated ministry”, and also the “my own church comes first” reasoning. I began to want to dig deeper into the role spiritual leadership in addressing the problem of homelessness and how it could birth and continue these ministries in small towns. God provided the impetus to begin this project on a cold winter night in 2004 and the journey, though long and winding, has provided many worthwhile discoveries. Hopefully, the reader will find them useful.

ABSTRACT

Leadership for Beginning a Homeless Ministry in a Small Southern Town

This study explored the relationship between spirituality and leadership in faith-based homeless shelters in rural communities. A qualitative method of research was employed to determine the most effective type of leadership needed for homeless ministries. Fifty leaders from fourteen shelters in five states were surveyed. Interviews with the executive directors of these shelters were also conducted. The study revealed that the most effective leaders modeled themselves after Jesus' example, and depended upon prayer to give them compassion and to help them identify with the poor.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

A Brief History of the Problem of Homelessness in the United States

Searching for a Christian response to the problem of homelessness is not a new struggle for communities in this country. It is a problem that has existed since colonial times. Kenneth Kusmer in his book *Down and Out, On the Road: The Homeless in American History* wrote “known during the colonial era as ‘the wandering poor,’ ‘sturdy beggars,’ or simply as ‘vagrants,’ the homeless first became noticeable in the late eighteenth century, then grew significantly in number after 1820,” with the rise of urbanization and industrial development.¹ By the mid nineteenth century, municipalities were setting aside rooms in police stations that would provide places for destitute people to stay. Charities also began to try to deal with the problem of homelessness for the first time. The Western Soup Society, for example, was established in Philadelphia during the depression of 1837. It was funded by two “anonymous” men who believed that the best way to address “the sufferings of the poor” was through establishing a soup kitchen.²

Joel Blau in his book *The Visible Poor* described the history of homelessness as having passed through five major periods. The first, referred to as the pre-industrial phase, included periods of homelessness from ancient and medieval times up to the

¹ Kusmer, Kenneth L., *Down and Out, One the Road: The Homeless in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3.

²*Ibid.*, 29.

periods of the early settling of our country. Homelessness during this period was characterized by the lack of available housing. Although the distribution of resources was not always equitable during this time there still would have been shortages because there simply was not enough shelter available. The second phase took place during the early industrialization period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Those who came from the countryside to work in the factories often became homeless. Although this homelessness was often temporary it happened frequently as laborers made the transition to the city.³

Homelessness in America became a national problem in the 1870s as the number of homeless people began to increase dramatically. Two factors contributing to this increase were the use of the railroad during the Civil War and the practice of foraging for food and supplies. The Civil War gave many men their first opportunity to ride the railroad. Soldiers became accustomed to being transported in cattle cars, herded together much like the animals for which the cars had been designed for, and therefore the practice continued even after the war. In addition, because of the necessary foraging that took place during the war, soldiers already knew how to look for food to supplement meager army rations. These behaviors learned during the war would later reappear in a new kind of homeless man that emerged in the 1870s. These men were known as “tramps” because they would ride the trains without paying, form bands that would rob and scare people, and generally make a nuisance of them selves.⁴

³ Joel Blau, *The Visible Poor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 9-10.

⁴ Kusmer, Kenneth L., *Down and Out, On the Road: The Homeless in American History* (New York: University Oxford Press, 2002), 35-56.

While some homeless survived as “tramps,” other homeless moved to the cities in search of work. Organized charities in these cities sought to separate the “worthy poor” who wanted to work from the “urban beggars” who did not. They established privately run shelters to replace the poorly ventilated and extremely filthy police station “tramp rooms.” These charities often viewed the homeless with contempt and made them pass a “work test” before they could receive food or lodging.⁵

One of these charities, the Charity Organization Society (COS), quickly became the leader in social reform concerning the poor. Founded in 1877, the COS movement used the virtue of work as its ideal. This was in response to the fear that the tramps and vagrants’ penchant for surviving by the charity of others would be a detriment to society. The COS began to set up “wayfarer’s lodges” that were based on a ‘work for food’ model. A “wayfarer” was provided with room and board, but in return was required to do a certain amount of work. Men usually chopped wood or broke stone while women did laundry or scrubbed floors. The hope was to instill a work ethic in the homeless population. The first wayfarer’s lodge opened in Boston in 1879. Others followed in mostly large or medium sized towns like Brooklyn, Cincinnati and Detroit. Rarely did smaller communities set up these types of shelters, and in the entire south there were only two, Louisville and Baltimore.⁶

The lodge proved not to be as successful as originally hoped. The police station rooms began to close down at the urging of the charity societies. However, many of the homeless who used the jails as shelters did not come to wayfarer’s lodges. On the

⁵ Ibid,11.

⁶ Ibid., 73-77.

contrary, the closing of the station facility in Philadelphia in 1885, for example, resulted in only a slight increase in the use of the wayfarer's lodge (from 31,492 to 33,628).⁷ The conclusion that the Philadelphia Society for Organized Charity (SOC) drew was that most of the men who used police stations had been "work-shy" tramps to begin with.⁸

Ken Kusmer offers another interpretation of the data collected by the Philadelphia SOC. He argues that the data used "can just as easily be used to indicate the failure rather than the success of the wayfarer's lodge. Perhaps the men who had previously used the police station houses avoided the SOC facility not because they were lazy, but because they found the 'work test' patently absurd and general treatment they received humiliating."⁹ As evidence, he used the case of a writer in 1895, who impersonated a homeless man to investigate a Boston wayfarer's lodge. The writer had this to say:

I entered the office of the "Lodge" after a hard, slippery tramp of more than a mile through the storm of alternate sleet and rain. As homeless men do not carry umbrellas, I was drenched to the skin. Yet, I was quickly shoved into line to wait my turn with the night- clerk who was registering applicants. "What's your name? How old are you? Where were you born? Next!" When my turn came, I leaned over the rail just a trifle to make myself heard. The registrar's response was "Here, you bum, you, what do you think you're doing here? Get off that rail and stand up straight..."¹⁰

This sort of treatment led many homeless men to seek out the less desirable private lodging houses rather than be subjected to such humiliation.

⁷ Ibid 75.

⁸ Ibid., 73-77.

⁹ Ibid., 76.

¹⁰ Ibid., 76.

Peter H. Rossi in his book *Down and Out in America* describes a significant development in the late nineteenth century. He writes

It was in the nineteenth century that transient homelessness became institutionalized and segregated in American cities. Toward the last quarter of the century, Skid Row areas were established in each of the major cities, sections inhabited mainly by homeless men.¹¹

Skid row came to encompass hotels, lodging houses and restaurants that provided inexpensive food and housing. This movement would continue well into the twentieth century.

The perception of the homeless began to change in the twentieth century.

Writers such as William Dan Howells and Josiah Flynt began to introduce new perspectives on the homeless to their readers, helping to undermine some of the old stereotypes. William Graham Sumner, a Yale sociologist, believed it was “immoral to withhold food from the destitute until their character went through an investigation”.¹² The model set forth by the COS movement began to lose momentum and was being replaced by more spiritually oriented groups such as the Salvation Army and other various rescue missions. These groups were concerned with the homeless’ spiritual lives and were evangelical in their social outreach. Because they believed that Christ died for all people, they made no distinction between “worthy” or “unworthy” poor, and sought to provide food and shelter regardless of “character traits”. They did not use work tests as a basis for help because Commodore Fredrick Booth-Tucker felt that the poor had already

¹¹ Rossi, Peter, *Down and Out in America* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Pres), 20.

¹² Kusmer, 12.

suffered enough and should not “be nailed to a cross of shame” in addition.¹³ However, these groups did require attendance at worship services and Bible studies. They later added “industrial missions” that not only fed and housed the ‘clients’, but also paid them a small wage for collecting items that could be salvaged and resold in shops.¹⁴

By the time of the Great Depression, the Federal government became involved and helped to soften the images of the tramp. They did little, however, to call attention to the underlying causes of homelessness. Out of the dire circumstances of the depression came the first and only federal program in American history designed to deal directly with the problem of the homeless unemployed. The Federal Transient Service sought to provide humane treatment for this outcast group. In its two-plus years of existence the government operated some 300 centers in cities and towns throughout America. Eventually the FTS operated 300 camps in rural areas as well. The Roosevelt administration decided to phase out this program since it believed that the problem had been solved with the virtual elimination of shantytowns. It then turned its attention to social security and large-scale public works programs. The release of nearly 400,000 persons from federal transient centers in late 1935, taxed local welfare institutions to the limit. “In most cases” one reporter said of New York City’s homeless, “the best that can be offered these strays is the municipal lodging house at night –and the public streets by day.”¹⁵ The transient laborers of the late 1930’s and World War II years that were

¹³ Kusmer, 88.

¹⁴ Kusmer, 90.

¹⁵ Kusmer, 230.

depicted in John Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, temporarily revived concern for homeless laborers.

During the 1950's the cities of the United States turned to renovating their central business districts, and dealing the dilemma of what to do with the unsightly buildings known as Skid Row. There were several social science research studies done during this time. One of note was Donald Bogue's *Skid Row in America's Cities*. The focus of this study was the homeless in Chicago in 1958, but using the 1950 census data Bogues estimated that there were approximately 100,000 homeless people on the Skid Rows of America's forty-one largest cities.¹⁶

Much of the "skid-row bum laying in a gutter" image of the homeless that we have today came from the late 1970's, when beggars and street people became increasingly noticeable in the downtowns of many cities. The recession of the 1980's caused an increase in the homeless population. A widely cited Department of Housing and Urban Development report in 1984 estimated that there were between 250,000 and 350,000 persons living on the street or in shelters on any given night in the United States.¹⁷ That figure had doubled to almost 500,000 people by 1990. In 1996, the Urban Institute estimated that on an average night, 470,000 persons in the United States were sleeping in shelters, but that a much larger number, almost two million, had experienced homelessness at some point during the previous year. At present, the National Alliance to End Homelessness in Ten Years estimates that there are between 700,000 and 800,000

¹⁶ Rossi, 28-29.

¹⁷ Jencks, Christopher, *The Homeless* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), 3.

people that are homeless in the United States on any given night. In fact, “over the course of the year, between 2.5 and 3.5 million people will experience homelessness in this country.”¹⁸

In her book, *Helping America's Homeless*, Martha Burt summarized many of the writings pertaining to homeless in the following manner, “All the writings conclude that the essential characteristics of homelessness as a phenomenon are its transience, instability and flux.”¹⁹ The United States saw transient homelessness especially in the late 19th and early twentieth centuries. The increased industrial development opportunities across the nation saw an ever-changing population of men follow these opportunities. They were not “homeless” in the traditional sense of the word, but they did not have a permanent place to live.

Homelessness in America was also described by instability. Many homeless surveys in the 1980's and 1990's asked the question “When was the last time you had a home or other permanent place to stay?”²⁰ Writers struggling with the concept of homelessness also recognized that often families who found themselves in a state of flux had actually had a home but a hurricane, fire, flood or other natural disaster had rendered them homeless. The history of homelessness in America has shown that it has continuously been a difficult problem to address and define.

¹⁸ "North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness," 2000, <http://www.ncceh.org/> (accessed May 2006).

¹⁹ *Helping America's Homeless*, Burt, Martha (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press, 2001), 2.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 4.

Problem of Homelessness Today

A negative view of the homeless has persisted even in more recent times. Bill O'Reilly, speaking on his April 18, 2006 nationally syndicated radio show, asserted, "The homeless will not support themselves because they want to get drunk and high or they're just too lazy." O'Reilly's comments were in response to an April 15 decision by the ninth United States Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco that ruled that police officers cannot arrest people for loitering in homeless encampments in the section of Los Angeles known as Skid Row. O'Reilly's view contrasted with the National Resource and Training Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness assertion that the fact is...

Debilitating mental illness such as schizophrenia and manic depression, physical and sexual abuse, abject poverty, and other involuntary health conditions such as diabetes and cancer are among the leading causes of homelessness in America. Nearly 39 percent of the homeless report mental illness."²¹

Overcoming these biases has continued to be a difficult task. Martha Burt writes "As long ago as the 19th century, writers on homelessness were taking pains to differentiate homeless people on the basis of their "worthiness" or "deservingness."²² Usually groups serving the homeless would quickly determine that drinking and drug use deemed one "unworthy". Views on how to treat those who were obviously mentally ill differed, however. Since the mentally ill often behaved in frightening ways, they have not always received a great deal of sympathy for their plight. Persons with alcohol, drug, and mental problems (ADM) have had a difficult mix of problems to address. Policies

²¹ *National Resource and Training Center*, 2006, "National Resource And Training Center On Homelessness And Mental Illness, <http://www.nrchmi.samhsa.gov/> (accessed May 2006).

²² Burt, 97.

relating to the treatment of the homeless with ADM problems have tended to focus on how these problems led to their present homelessness.

The National Resource and Training Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness offers the following make-up of the homeless population in the United States. The majority of the homeless in the United States are unaccompanied adults, but the Center does note that the number of homeless families is growing. The demographics are as follows:

- 66% are single adults, and of these, 75% are men
- 11% are parents with children, 84% of whom are single women
- 23% are children under 18 with a parent, 42% of whom are under five years.

Racial and Ethnic Minorities, particularly African Americans, are overrepresented

- 41% are non-Hispanic whites
- 40% are African Americans
- 11% are Hispanic
- 8% are Native Americans

Homelessness continues to be a largely urban phenomenon

- 71% are in central cities
- 21% are in suburbs
- 9% are in rural areas²³

The problem of homelessness seems to have been best addressed when faith based ministries joined with municipalities to work together as a team in their community to

²³ *National Resource and Training Center*, (accessed May 2006).

seek a solution. This has required spiritually based leadership reflecting maturity and a servant leader's heart. One example of this was the Looking Homeward Plan: The 10 – Year Plan to End Homelessness developed by the Asheville Buncombe County in January 2005. This 33 member group developed a plan to address homelessness in their community that included government leaders, mental health professionals, the police, businessmen, homeless shelter workers and relief workers. They presented their plan to the City Council and Commission in January 2005. Briefly, the research of the committee revealed that the current way of addressing homelessness in their community was costly and ineffective. An inordinate amount of energy and money was going to a small percentage of the homeless population known as the “chronic homeless”. The Ten-Year Plan was rooted in a housing “first” approach that sought to put the homeless into permanent housing as soon as possible. The report went on to state,

“Housing first is sometimes criticized as being a ‘government handout’ or ‘giving something for nothing’. The reality is that the program is successful and can transform a community. Once a homeless, mentally-ill person has a place to live and does not have to worry about where to sleep, what to eat, or potential violence, life changes dramatically.”²⁴

The Problem of Homelessness in North Carolina and in the Town of Lenoir

The problem of homelessness has been difficult for large communities to address because of the sheer number of people affected, yet the problem of rural homelessness has been even more difficult. According to the National Rural Health Association of Kansas City, Missouri, it has been estimated that there are some 70,000 homeless people in small towns nationwide. In many rural areas, there are no men's shelters. The absence

²⁴ *Looking Homeward Report*, (Asheville and Buncombe County, 2005), 9.

of emergency shelters in rural North Carolina has been apparent. The state's Office of Economic Opportunities, which oversees shelters, pointed out that 51 of North Carolina's 100 counties lack shelters for the homeless. Nearly all the counties that were without shelters were rural counties. From July 1999 to June 2000, there were 47,475 homeless people that were served by the 134 facilities in the 55 counties that received Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) program funding.²⁵ Approximately 3,400 homeless people were sheltered each day by these 134 facilities. Of the 47,475 people served during that period, 64% were single adult males and females, 23% were children between ages birth to 17 years, 36% were members of families, and 8% were veterans. More than 5,600 homeless families were served during this time period.

The leading causes of homelessness for people receiving the ESG grants from July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000 included unemployment, under-employment, alcohol, substance abuse, mental illness, eviction, domestic violence/sexual assault, release from prison, child abuse and neglect, parental/child conflict, natural disaster and HIV/AIDS.²⁶ To better understand the various issues regarding rural homelessness and efforts to ameliorate the problem, the situation in Lenoir, North Carolina provided a useful context for study.

Lenoir, North Carolina has long been a furniture town with many positive qualities. The community has an excellent school system, many active civic clubs, and a good number of churches. A ministerial association exists that consists of 22 member

²⁵ "North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness," 2000, (accessed May 2006).

²⁶ "North Carolina State Data Center," 2006. <http://www.sdc.state.nc.us/> (accessed May 2006).

churches (The Lenoir Ministerial Association). The LMA, as it is called, has as its purpose “to cultivate cooperation, fellowship, and mutual helpfulness among the various Christian denominations in the area.” The following is an excerpt taken from a Percept study done in February of 2004.²⁷ It gives statistics about the people and places of Lenoir within a five-mile radius.

The projected population density is somewhat low. Currently there are 47,221 people in this radius. This represents about a 9.1% increase since 1990. Between 2004 and 2009, the population is projected to grow by 4.2%. The overall diversity of the population is 87% Anglos, 9% African American, 3% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 1% Native American and other. The largest group of people is rural families (48%), and the largest generation is the 23-43 age group (29%). The population’s marital status is 62% married, 19% divorced or widowed, and 20% single or never married. Educationally only 64% of the population has graduated from high school and only 10% have a college degree. The average household income is \$45,680 per year. Receptivity to faith involvement is listed as very high.²⁸

Lenoir currently has four shelters that are very specific in their outreach.

- Bethel Colony of Mercy - a Christian organization that has a 65-day program ministering especially to those with addictions.
- Caldwell House - A halfway house for those who want to continue their sobriety. Residents may stay here up to a year.
- The Women’s Shelter - A home that serves battered women and their children. It is an emergency shelter.
- The Kwanzaa Family Inn - A home that serves homeless women and children who would be categorized as transitional homeless.

²⁷ *Percept Group, Inc*, 2000, "Percept, Zip Code 28645," <http://www.percept.info/> (accessed February 12, 2004).

²⁸ Ibid.

In an interview with Lenoir police Lieutenant Sid Pope, he estimated that there were approximately 10 to 15 homeless people in Lenoir. The average age was 40, and he estimated that 99 percent had addiction problems.²⁹

During the past three years, the Lenoir area has experienced, at times, double-digit unemployment due to the outsourcing of furniture jobs. This has put tremendous stress on the economy. There have been many foreclosures of homes, failed small businesses, and an overall spirit of defeat in the community.

Ultimately, this begs the question: when faced with the problem of homelessness in a community, what should be the response of the Christians within that community? What would be the criteria needed to determine if a shelter would best serve the homeless, especially in a small town? The town of Lenoir has a population of just 17,000 and has struggled with this problem for many years. Many attempts have been made to solve this problem, and while some have provided relief for periods of time, others were less successful due to lack of funding, staffing or appropriate zoning.

The solution lasting for the longest period was known as “Rex House.” It began in July of 1988 when a group of ministers came together to sponsor a jail ministry known as “Amazing Grace Ministries.”³⁰ This ministry recognized the need for those who were just released from jail to have a place to go that would keep them from returning to the street. The ministry was deeded property from a local building contractor and set up its

²⁹ Pope, Sid, Interview by John Fowler, 2006.

³⁰ Barnes, Fred, Interview by John Fowler, 2006.

shelter along the lines of the Salvation Army model.³¹ In 1993, due to a staffing problem, the ministry was turned over to “Bethel Colony of Mercy” (a halfway house for recovering alcoholics). Bethel Colony ran it for one year and then turned it over to a small Pentecostal church who renamed it “Rex House” in memory of a local homeless man who froze to death one night as he slept outside in the park. Rex House continued under the small church’s auspices (with some help from other churches) until its closing in 1998, due to lack of staffing and inadequate funding.

The next effort towards a solution was made by the Salvation Army of Lenoir. In October 2000, Captain Timothy Bartral described the Army’s plans to locate the shelter on the top floor of the building that they were renting in downtown Lenoir.³² Renovations on the building would include a kitchen, laundry room, showers, day room, and bunk beds to hold 20 or so individuals. An architect would draw blueprints for the finished design, which included a separate entrance. A problem arose, however, when the Army could not proceed without purchasing the building. Bartral’s plans included appealing to churches, individuals, and corporations for funding, and making the public aware of the need. The “lodge” would be a facility where individuals could receive assistance to get back on their feet. Rules, regulations, and criteria would reflect the need for individuals to want to try and help themselves.³³ After four years the Salvation Army would eventually give up the effort. Salvation Army Board Chairman Joseph Delk (2003-2004)

³¹ The Salvation Army model refers to a system in which men are allowed to stay at night, but are sent out during the day to look for work. Church services are held every night and attendance is mandatory.

³² Bartral, Timothy, Interview by John Fowler, 2006.

³³ *Lenoir News-Topic*, October 29, 2002, sec. A.

said that he and other board members “looked at what needs best suited the community.”³⁴ Delk mentioned that with existing ministries available such as Yokefellow and the Lenoir Soup Kitchen, they were trying to avoid the duplication of services. The plan to house the shelter on the second floor of the existing Salvation Army location also had to be approved by the Salvation Army Regional Office in Charlotte, North Carolina. The office conducted a feasibility study for the project, which assessed the need for such a shelter and the financial costs. The regional representatives questioned the cost of maintaining a shelter on a 24-hour basis. “The regional office did not approve the plan because it said the local office did not have the funding to maintain it,” said Delk.³⁵

Another effort began in 2003 under the inspiration and leadership of Natalie Johnson. After praying for several years about the plight of the homeless, Johnson decided to do something to help. She said, “I have always had a passion for helping the less fortunate - the people society has pushed aside.”³⁶ A life-long resident of Caldwell County, Johnson is affiliated with *Skill Creations*, an organization that works with the mentally challenged. Johnson estimated that at that time, there were as many as 50 people living under “the bridge.”³⁷ This effort began with Johnson inviting the homeless to come to the Stover Bail Bonds office in downtown Lenoir. Johnson and her helpers served a hot meal and also offered a variety of winter coats, socks, shoes, blankets, and sleeping

³⁴ Walsh, Eileen, *Lenoir News-Topic*, June 18 2004, sec. A.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, sec. A.

³⁶ *Lenoir News-Topic*, December 9, 2003, sec. A.

³⁷ In Lenoir the bridges were popular places for the homeless to set up “housekeeping”. The main bridge where this occurred was located on the road into downtown Lenoir and was in close proximity to many businesses and shopping centers.

bags. Canned food was also made available to the homeless. Johnson expressed her desire to see a men's shelter built in Lenoir and that she would do so herself if she had the resources.”³⁸

In May of 2004, a new city ordinance affected the whole climate of homeless ministry in our community. Acting on complaints by the local Wal-Mart and other downtown business operators, Lenoir Police Chief Joey Reynolds requested a city ordinance that gave police the authority to respond to complaints of panhandling and trespassing. Reynolds said at the City Council meeting that “We [the police] have received a number of complaints about the homeless people from local business owners.”³⁹ In a letter to Lenoir officials, Tim Clark, manager of Wal-Mart said, “Over the past few months we have noticed an increase in beggars at the front of the building soliciting money from our customers and associates. This has resulted in aggravated customers and the loss of sales. We would support any ordinances that would help resolve this issue.”⁴⁰ The ordinance passed and the homeless were forced to find other places to live.

In response to the city's actions, Reverend Myrtle Carlton, pastor of Vision, Hope, and Peace United Church of Worship in Lenoir, tried to open a men's shelter on Main Street in Lenoir in June of 2004. Pastor Carlton began feeding the homeless hot meals on the weekends when the Lenoir Soup Kitchen was closed. The effort by Pastor Carlton was aided by Ms. Natalie Johnson of Living Word Fellowship. Johnson said,

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ *Lenoir News-Topic*, sec. A.

⁴⁰ *Lenoir News-Topic*, May 28, 2004, sec. A.

“We just admire Pastor Carlton. She has our support on anything she needs.”⁴¹ The next step in Carlton’s plan was to open a shelter (Genesis House) that would include more than just a place to stay. Genesis House would also provide its patrons with help in finding a job, job training, opportunities to attend substance abuse meetings, and other resources as well. The Main Street location would be a temporary location for which Carlton had hoped to receive a conditional-use zoning permit from the city. That permit was denied because her location was zoned “only for residential homes.” Although Pastor Carlton and Johnson could continue to feed the hungry, the shelter cannot operate due to zoning laws.

On July 20, 2004, a group of pastors and concerned citizens gathered at St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church in Lenoir to discuss the homeless situation in the community. The meeting was convened by retiring pastor, Reverend Ingram Parmley, a long-time advocate for the homeless who wished to “pass the baton” and find interested people to continue to address the homeless problem in his stead. At that meeting a deep concern was expressed for the safety and well-being of the homeless in Lenoir. This was particularly true in light of the new city ordinance that allowed local bridges to be posted with “no trespassing signs.” During the meeting, past efforts by the community to address the problem were discussed, including those by The Rex House, Salvation Army, and Pastor Carlton. A plan of action emerged from this meeting that included seeking assistance from other communities where shelters exist, and talking with local mission leaders, law enforcement officials, and other knowledgeable people who could help to determine the actual need for a homeless shelter.

⁴¹ Terry, Edward, *Lenoir News-Topic*, July 6, 2004, sec. A.

By November of 2004, the community group decided to explore the possibility of partnering with McDowell Mission and Dulatown Outreach Inc. in order to develop a shelter. After many meetings and much effort, the Caldwell Homeless Shelter opened on February 28, 2005. It survived for eight months, but closed on October 31, 2005. The ministry effectively served over 100 men, with an average population of 12 residents. The shelter targeted the “chronic” homeless, but ended up serving the “transitional” homeless. The partnership with McDowell Mission was brief because their offer to provide staffing did not work. The staff person they provided lasted two weeks and then quit. Then residents of the shelter served as temporary directors. This worked remarkably well, but was inadequate in the long run. Lack of funding was a crippling problem for the organization that resulted in operating in a “crisis” mode far too often. In studying the efforts in Lenoir, it became obvious that effective leadership was a critical factor in having a ministry to the homeless. Key issues such as funding, political action, recruitment of staff and volunteers were some of the very challenging concerns of the efforts undertaken. Skilled, dedicated, spiritual leaders were needed to organize those efforts as well as minister to those in need.

The Need for Spiritual Leadership

Good spiritual leadership tops the needs of the efforts to help the homeless. The partnership between Dulatown Outreach, Mc Dowell Mission, and the Caldwell Homeless Shelter Committee began to falter as selfish ambition began to take priority over kingdom ambition. Ken Blanchard describes this phenomenon as the temptation in

leadership to “edging God out” as opposed to “exalting God only.”⁴² Both leadership styles have the acronym EGO’ yet they are very different in their approach and attitude in serving others. McDowell Mission’s primary goal was to help start a mission in Caldwell County so that they would no longer have to care for the homeless from Caldwell County. Dulatown Outreach’s primary goal was to have someone occupy the building they owned, so that they could collect rent and prepare to launch their ministry to women and children in the facility that same facility. Caldwell Homeless Shelter Committee’s goal was to get started before the winter set in and develop a long-term strategy later. The Committee began to differ considerably over mission and location of the ministry. As time went on, the lack of spiritual leadership and the conflicting agendas made it impossible to work together in serving the homeless in our community.

Spiritual leadership is a dimension that is not often addressed in serving the homeless. What is spiritual leadership? Spiritual leadership is mature servant leadership that aspires to greatness in the kingdom of God. Reggie McNeal describes the need for spiritual leadership in this way,

Good leaders are usually adequate to meet the leadership demands placed on them. Good leaders get things done. They keep things going. They assess situations and devise solutions. In normal times, we can generally get by with good leaders.”⁴³

Genuine servant leadership, however, aspires to biblical greatness. Two passages from the Gospel of Mark help to understand the kind of spiritual leadership needed

⁴² Blanchard, Ken and Phil Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus* (Nashville, TN: W. Publishing Group, 2005), 48-50.

⁴³ McNeal, Reggie, *Practicing Greatness: 7 Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 5.

today. The disciples had been following Jesus in Mark 9: 33-35, and it says:

They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them,

‘What were you arguing about on the road?’ But, they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.’

The disciples were used to thinking of greatness that comes from position and power.

Jesus was correcting their false view of greatness and declaring that greatness comes from serving. Unfortunately, people today still think of greatness in terms of size and prestige. Further in Mark two of Jesus’ disciples, James and John, came to him with their worldly ambition. Mark 10: 35-37 said,

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.” What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory.”

The disciples were thinking of themselves, their prestige and status. They were not yet grasping the type of service Christ was calling them to do. Jesus reminded James and John of his example of leadership when he said “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

Jesus was seeking to explain to his disciples what genuine servant leadership is all about. It is about becoming great in serving others without regard for recognition, status, or reward.

Reggie McNeal believes that the spiritual leader should be first and foremost a servant leader. There is a significant need today for great spiritual leaders who are seeking the greatness that comes from following Christ’s example of servanthood. The

leadership of any effort to serve the homeless needs servant leadership in order to sustain the mission.

Another lens to view spiritual leadership comes from Lovett Weems in his book *Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit*. He describes a spiritual leader as one who knows God. He writes “Leadership and spirituality are inevitably linked. Leadership is only possible to the extent that we are able to discern a compelling and driving vision of what is good and acceptable.”⁴⁴ Those who seek to serve God as spiritual leaders in the Wesleyan tradition are described by John Wesley in his sermon “Circumcision of the Heart.” He says that they should...

Have no end, no ultimate end but God. Desire not to live for themselves but to praise God’s name. Let all your thoughts, words, and works tend to God’s glory. Set your heart firm on God, and on other things, only as they are from God.⁴⁵

Edward Hammett believes that the spiritual leadership of today must be able to build bridges to a very secular culture. He writes in *Spiritual Leadership in a Secular Age* that what is needed today is spiritual leadership that can address four questions.⁴⁶

1. What are the ingredients of effective spiritual leadership in an increasingly secular world?
2. How can a leader and a community of faith build bridges rather than barriers in an un-churched culture?

⁴⁴ Weems, Lovett, *Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 118.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 116.

⁴⁶ Hammett, Edward, *Spiritual Leadership in a Secular Age* (Danvers, Massachusetts: Christian Board of Publication, 2005), 6-8.

3. What are the leadership forms and functions needed for effective church ministering in the twenty-first century world?
4. How can a leader maintain the integrity of one's faith while building bridges with an un-churched world?

Specifically, Hammett believes the leadership challenge today is:

- Keeping people older than 60 in leadership, while still engaging people younger than 40
- Attracting and keeping those from the un-churched culture
- Finding resources and programs that are effective in speaking to the needs of the church as well as the un-churched of multiple generations
- Building effective disciplined relationships in a fast-paced world.⁴⁷

There are four reasons why spiritual leadership is critical to the success of a homeless ministry: the need to view this ministry as a calling, the need to have a servant attitude of exalting God only, the need for great resiliency in this ministry, and the need for the deep compassion required to meet the challenges of this work.

The call to serve the homeless is a biblical notion demonstrated by Abraham, Moses, and Paul in response to God's will. This sense of calling is a critical dimension of spiritual leadership; without this calling the faith to believe that God will supply the needs of the ministry for funding, staffing, political wisdom, and compassion for the homeless will suffer.

⁴⁷ Ibid., XIV.

The importance of having a servant attitude that seeks to exalt God only is articulated by Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges. Blanchard and Hodges state that a servant attitude is found in one that worships God only, depends on God completely, exalts God as the only audience and judge, and is aware that God is always watching. The acronym EGO can refer to a self-centered leadership of “edging God out”, as well as a spiritual leadership of “exalting God only”.⁴⁸

The need for great resiliency is part of the endurance factor in leadership. Staying power is vital in this ministry. Leaders, who have a weak understanding of spiritual warfare, even while realizing the importance of prayer, may be overwhelmed with the problems they face. The resilient leader must develop a spiritual toughness that allows him to have both the strength to endure trials and the ability to confront problems with God’s power.

The deep compassion of spiritual leaders distinguishes them from those leaders that are merely doing their “duty”. Efforts to help the poor in the United States and England throughout history show the difference that compassion makes. Compassionate leadership views the homeless as neighbors, practices the Golden Rule of treating others as they would like to be treated, and serves those created in God’s image with dignity.

The spiritual quality of leadership is a crucial factor in the implementation and continuation of a faith-based ministry. Without a certain level of this leadership throughout the organization the ministry will not survive. The challenges that the leader will face will prove to be overwhelming and the temptation to “loose heart” as Reggie

⁴⁸ Blanchard, Ken and Phil Hodges, 63.

McNeal refers to⁴⁹ p. x, will cause the leader and its organization to give up its effort.

Spiritual leadership is greatly needed to address the problem of homelessness in communities today.

How do leaders develop and maintain the spirituality that helps them in their leadership of homeless ministries? One way is to investigate efforts of spiritual leadership is by studying spiritual leaders of the past and present who have served the poor, and in particular the homeless. Leadership authors Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges write,

The journey of life is to move from a self-serving heart to a serving heart. You finally become an adult when you realize that life is about what you give, rather than what you get.”⁵⁰

We learn from the spiritual leadership of those involved with homeless ministry today by investigating how they maintain this spiritual edge that gives them the endurance and strength to effectively serve the homeless. Those that work with the homeless face people who are experiencing the difficult problems of drug and alcohol addictions, mental illness, as well as the insecurity of not having a place to live. Consequently this ministry can be especially draining. Trying to serve the homeless with only social work skills simply is not enough. Spiritual leaders of the past such as St. Francis of Assisi, John and Charles Wesley, and William and Catherine Booth had outstanding ministries of social outreach that were under-girded by a vital piety. The failed efforts of homeless ministry of the past twenty years in Lenoir reinforce the fact that the spiritual dimension is vital for leadership with the homeless. By studying the spiritual component of

⁴⁹ Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), x.

⁵⁰ Blanchard and Hodges, 22.

homeless ministry leaders, one can gain insight into their approach to funding as a spiritual issue (stewardship), into the way they address political issues (appearing before zoning boards and city councils), into how they select and train staff and volunteers for this ministry (leadership selection), and into how their spirituality gives them compassion for those facing such serious life issues. Specifically looking at the spiritual disciplines that these leaders practice gives insight into the type of spirituality that is needed to be effective and resilient. John Wesley and the early Methodists' are a good example of leadership whose spirituality along with their work with the poor was the result of a theological framework that utilized class meetings for spiritual development and the visiting of the poor as an essential work and means of grace.⁵¹

The Research Question

Faced with the problem of homelessness in a rural community, what should be the response of Christians within the community? There is often a general concern for the problem but a lack of spiritual leadership directed toward solving the problem.

Ultimately, this begs the question, what type of spiritual leadership is needed to begin and then sustain a homeless shelter in a small, southern town such as Lenoir, North Carolina?

This study explored the relationship between spirituality and leadership in faith-based homeless shelters in rural communities. The following questions guided this investigation:

1. How do leaders draw upon God for spiritual strength?

⁵¹ D. Michael Henderson, *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples* Indiana: Francis Asbury Press of Evangel Publishing House, 1997, 127.

2. What biblical models and perspectives influence the practice of leadership to the homeless?
3. How does spirituality and its practice help leaders deal with the many challenges of this type of work?
4. How does the leader's relationship with God develop and change as a result of his work with the homeless?

The nature of this study was a qualitative study that used surveys and interviews of homeless ministry leaders in predominantly small southern towns in order to explore the spiritual dimensions of their leadership. The results of this study may help guide other communities in their leadership selection for homeless ministry. A Wesleyan theological framework was used as the basis for studying the spiritual disciplines and in particular servant leadership and ministry with the poor. This framework paid special attention to the early Methodists' work with the poor. The literature review explored three areas of literature: the problem of homelessness, spiritual formation, and leadership theory and practice. The first area of literature review examined the problem of homelessness, while the other two areas focused on the solution. The review also examined the history of homeless ministry efforts and addresses the problem with spirituality and leadership theory. The blending of spirituality and leadership was explored in order to discover the right mix for effective leadership with the homeless.

The Research Approach

This study was an exploratory study of the spiritual leadership of homeless ministry program leaders in predominately small, southern towns. The surveys and interviews of the homeless ministry leaders were designed to examine their passion for God and for helping the homeless. Using this methodology of research enabled a more comprehensive view of spiritual leadership that addresses the community social problems. One question that arose was could such a ministry be best led by a Christian with social work skills, a pastor with theological training, a businessman with a strong faith, or someone that has been homeless before and knows what it is like? An exploratory study allowed an in-depth look at the faith, the gifts for leadership, and background of effective spiritual leaders in homeless ministries.

Subsidiary Questions

What type of spiritual leader does it take to begin and direct a homeless ministry in a small, southern town? What spiritual disciplines need to be practiced in order to have the spiritual maturity it takes to care for the homeless, work with a diverse group of people, pray for God's guidance, and practice great faith for receiving God's provision? What type of spirituality is most common for this particular calling? What kind of spirituality is needed to begin and sustain such a ministry?

Homelessness is a difficult social problem for communities to address, and answering these questions is imperative for communities seeking to solve the problem. These questions are designed to refine the search for the spiritual leadership needed to begin a homeless ministry in a small, southern town. What are the essential characteristics of spiritual leadership and what are the principals of effective homeless

ministries? What does the variety of homeless ministries have in common in the way of operation and core values? Studying the successes and failures of other ministries is a good way to avoid some common pitfalls that could derail or terminate the ministry. These subsidiary questions are designed to focus on the specific kind of spiritual leadership needed to begin and develop to begin such a ministry.

Definition of Terms

Reggie McNeal says that spiritual leadership is “a work of the heart.”⁵² Instead of using the traditional language of spiritual formation, McNeal contends that many leaders fail because they lose heart. In the process of helping others maintain their hearts, leaders frequently ignore their own. Leadership programs for Christian leaders often place their focus on skill enhancement rather than the heart. The “heart” or the spiritual aspect of leadership is assumed to be already in place, and consequently, guidance and training in this area are lacking. In reviewing the cross section of spiritual formation literature and leadership theory, it is suggested that both are needed. Spiritual leadership combines spiritual maturity and skills for leading others. The spiritual maturity that comes as a result of faithfully practicing the classical spiritual disciplines must be combined with the skills that influence and direct people in order to truly fulfill God’s calling. Spiritual leadership is the blending of genuine piety with courageous leadership that seeks, above all else, God’s glory and will. This study defines spirituality as the faithful practice of the following classical spiritual disciplines: meditation, prayer, fasting, study, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, confession, worship, guidance, and celebration, and is

⁵² McNeal, 4.

especially reflected in faithfulness to the great commandment in Matthew 22: 37-39, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your entire mind. And love your neighbor as yourself.” Dallas Willard writes in his book *The Spirit of the Disciplines*,

My central claim is that we can become like Christ by doing one thing- by following him in the overall style of life he chose for himself. If we have faith in Christ, we must believe that he knew how to live. We can, through faith and grace, become like Christ by practicing the types of activities he engaged in, by arranging our whole lives around the activities he himself practiced in order to remain constantly at home in the fellowship of the Father.”⁵³

The faithful practice of the spiritual disciplines is foundational to transforming society.

Limits of the Study

The Wesleyan framework will be the framework for this study. The focus was on the theology of “gospel poverty”, the theology of seeing Christ in the poor, and the theology of visiting the poor as a means of grace for the sanctification of believers. This framework, based in the Wesleyan revival’s social and spiritual impact on England in the 18th century and also the spread of “scriptural holiness” to America, is a model of success still believed to be relevant today when addressing the problem of homelessness.

Summary

This exploratory study will unfold in five additional chapters. Chapter Two will describe the theological framework needed to lay a foundation for effective, Christian leadership. Chapter Three will be a literature review of the problem of homelessness, of

⁵³ Willard, Dallas, *The Spirit of Disciplines - Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York: Harper, 1988), ix.

ministry with the poor, and of spiritual formation and leadership theory and practice.

Chapter Four will be the project design and methodology. This chapter will explore both novice and seasoned homeless ministry leaders. It will contain interviews with seasoned homeless ministry leaders, and survey of leaders and volunteers in homeless ministry.

The methodology chosen will be explained as well. Chapter Five will look at the outcomes of this project design and examine what was learned from this project and research. Finally, Chapter Six will summarize the findings and suggest possible future studies that will aid communities in leadership selection for a homeless ministry. This study of seasoned, effective leaders will serve as a model for leadership selection when addressing the problem of homelessness.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

The Wesleyan Theological Model

The theological model that was used for this project came from John Wesley and his historic work with the poor in the 18th century. At that time in England, persistent attempts of the government to provide assistance to the poor were successful in creating an “us and them” mindset - those who paid the government poor tax and those who received it.¹ Wesley and the early Methodists’ work among the poor in contrast, treated the poor with compassion, and their ministry was based on the golden rule “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12).

Although Wesley shared with many other Christians a belief in grace, assurance, and sanctification; he combined them in a powerful manner to create five distinctive theological principles for living the Christian life. Wesleyan theology was rooted in grace. He believed that by grace we have received the undeserved, unmerited, and loving action of God in human activity and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The grace of God was “prevenient grace” that preceded salvation, continued in “justifying grace,” and was

¹ Heitzenrater, Richard P. *The Poor and the People Called Methodists 1729-1999*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Kingswoods Books, 2002), 31.

brought to fruition in “sanctifying grace.” Wesleyan theology had these distinctive principles:

- **Prevenient Grace** – This was the divine love that surrounds all humanity and precedes all of our conscious impulses. This grace would bring our first conviction of sinning against God.
- **Justification and Assurance** - Wesleyan theology stressed that a decisive change in the human heart could and did occur under the prompting of grace and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In justification one through faith was forgiven of sin and pardoned in love. Assurance would come as a result of the scriptural promise that at salvation the Spirit “bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16).
- **Sanctification and Perfection** - Spiritual growth would come through the power of the Holy Spirit as one is enabled to increase in the love of God and in love of neighbor. New birth would be the first step in the process of sanctification. Sanctifying grace would draw believers toward Christian perfection, which Wesley described as a heart “habitually filled with the love of God and neighbor” and as “having the mind of Christ and walking as he walked.”
- **Faith and Good Works** – Wesleyan theology affirmed that faith was the only response essential for salvation. Good works though were evidences of this decision. Works of piety and mercy were essential to Wesleyan theology.
- **Mission and Service**- John Wesley called his followers to “spread scriptural holiness across the land.” Scriptural holiness entailed more than personal piety: love of God would always be linked with love of neighbor, a passion for justice

and renewal in the life of the world. Included in this principle was the early Methodists belief in “gospel poverty” which was also known as “apostolic poverty”. This term was used to describe the belief that the poor uniquely bear the image of Christ and also that Christ and his first apostles were deliberately poor.²

This framework was built on two main tenets. These were servant leadership and ministry to the poor. The first tenet centered on the biblical theology of servant hood that lay the foundation of servant leadership. The second tenet centered on the ministry to the poor and was framed by three theological questions. The questions were, “How was the image of Christ evident in the poor?”, “How were the poor viewed as neighbor?”, and “How was God experienced as a result of answering his call to serve the poor?” These questions arose from practicing the spiritual discipline of service that was foundational to a theology of servant leadership. The framework examined the biblical theology of servant hood and its link with effective leadership for the poor. It included insights from church history, and explored what contemporary theology adds to this discussion.

Servant Leadership

Three biblical passages were primary in this discussion. They were the “Servant of the Lord” passage in Isaiah chapter 42, Jesus serving his disciples in John chapter 13, and Philippians 2: 5- 11 which described the mind of the servant of the Lord.

² Harriet Jane Olson, ed., *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2004), 46-47.

Isaiah 42 the Servant of the Lord

Chapter 42 of Isaiah centered on the nation of Israel as God's servant. The prophet Isaiah lived during the late eighth century and early seventh centuries. He was part of the upper class but urged care for the downtrodden. He was fiercely loyal to King Hezekiah but disagreed with the King's attempts to forge alliances with Egypt and Babylon in response to the threat of Assyria. One of the major themes of Isaiah was the 'Suffering Servant'. The following passage described the Servant of the Lord who would bring justice to the earth.

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight. I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice: he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on the earth. In his law the islands will put their hope." This is what the Lord says- he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it: "I the Lord, have called you in righteousness: I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. (Isaiah 42: 1-7)

The servant of the Lord was spoken of in the third person and his mission was described. God's special revelation was described in verse one. The chosen one would be filled with God's Spirit and his task would be to bring forth God's justice to all mankind. G. Ernest Wright in his commentary on Isaiah wrote, "The Spirit of the Lord in the Bible is that agency which God sends to work within individuals to the end that they may be empowered to do the work he would have them do."³ The servant of the Lord was described as the mediator of righteousness to the nations and the servant would continue

³ Wright, Ernest. *The Layman's Bible Commentary*. (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1966), 105.

this mission until this was accomplished. Isaiah 42:6-7 especially described the servant of the Lord's mission as one of opening the eyes of the blind, freeing captives from prison, and releasing those who have been in a dungeon of darkness. Henry Sloane Coffin in the Interpreter's Bible Commentary wrote,

The righteousness is not Israel's moral character, but God's dependable purpose. It is the thought that is repeated in II Timothy 2: 13, 'If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.' Israel was to be in her national life an incarnation of God's covenant.'⁴

The Servant of the Lord that would come was described by the prophet Isaiah as one that would be compassionate to the poor and would long for justice for them.

John 13 the Servant's Example

In John chapter 13 Jesus was gathering with his disciples in the upper room to celebrate the Passover. Jesus was aware that his public ministry to the Jews was over, and that the time for his supreme work, his death on the cross was imminent. He began preparing his disciples for the inevitable by showing them the suffering servant's example that Isaiah had prophesied. The disciples were keenly aware that there was not a servant available to perform the "lowly duty" of washing dirty feet. Usually it was the least of the servants that performed this chore, and with talk of who was the greatest among them, no one dared to assume that task. Jesus redefined greatness for them that evening, by showing them his definition:

⁴ Arthur, George and Henry Sloane Coffin. *The Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1956), 469.

After that, he poured water into a basin, and began to wash his disciple's feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then Lord," Simon Peter replied, not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet: his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew he was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" He asked them. "You call me "Teacher" and "Lord" and rightly so, for that are what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you should also wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. (John 13: 5-15)

R.V. Tasker, in commenting on this passage wrote,

Accordingly, it was not in spite of but because of his consciousness of his divine origin and destination that he rose from supper, and assumed the dress and posture of a slave; for a servant in truth he was, being none other than the ideal Servant delineated in Isaiah's prophecy who was destined "to pour out his soul unto death". (Isaiah 43:12)⁵

Peter resisted Jesus' attempt to wash his feet, because he associated what his Master was doing with the act that any slave might perform before a banquet. Peter's pride was evident in his refusal to have Jesus serve him. Peter finally acquiesced and allowed Jesus to wash his feet after Jesus had explained his actions. Roger Fredrickson in his commentary on John wrote,

The washing of Peter's feet points to Jesus' saving example on the cross. It is more than an act of humility to be imitated. The Greek expression 'eichein meros' (meaning "part of him") meant more than having fellowship with Jesus. Meros had the same meaning as the Hebrew belief, the word which described the heritage God has promised Israel.⁶

⁵ Tasker, R.V. *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Gospel According to St. John..* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 1978), 155.

⁶ Frederickson, Roger L. *The Communicator's Commentary Vol. 4.* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1985), 221.

In rejecting the offer of Jesus to wash his feet, Peter was turning away from his heritage of giving up those riches that can only come through the sacrificial death of Jesus. The teaching that followed in John 13:12-15 was one of example. John 13:14 was specific: “Now that I, your Lord, and teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.” Jesus was not only the fulfillment of Isaiah’s Servant of the Lord; he was a servant whose example was to be followed by His disciples.

Philippians 2: 5-11 the Mind of the Servant

In Philippians 2: 5-11, the Apostle Paul wrote that those who wished to be in unity with Christ should have the “mind of Christ.” Paul knew that genuine Christ-like service came from imitating Christ’s humility in His incarnation, his life, his death, and his resurrection. He wrote:

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in the very nature, God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death- even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2: 5-11)

The passage affirmed the pre-existence of Christ and described the nature of the incarnation. The sixth verse reminded the readers that Christ was in the “very nature of God,” the Second Person of the Triune God. The Greek word “*huparchein*” refers to his pre-incarnate state. Paul also wanted his readers to remember that the incarnation meant that Jesus was like them as well, appearing as a ‘man’. Verse seven stated, “But (he)

made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.” Maxie Dunnam, in his commentary on Philippians wrote

Paul’s own experience of the risen Lord was such a vital factor in the formation of his thought that, as he who had come so much to him surely did not begin to exist when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, so the nature did not change in essence, when he became man. He did empty himself. Though (he was) of the glories of heaven, of the prerogatives of being divine, he emptied himself of rank, privilege, and rights. The Lord became a servant.⁷

This “kenosis” or self-emptying was the taking of the form of a servant. R.P. Martin described it in his commentary: “the kenosis was the act of self-abnegation in which his native glory which he enjoyed from all eternity was hidden in his becoming man.”⁸

In England, the kenosis theory was introduced by Bishop Gore in 1889, in order to explain why our Lord seemed to be ignorant of errors in the Old Testament as support for “the higher criticism” interpretation of the Bible. Gore’s thesis was that in becoming man the Son had given up His divine knowledge.

J.I. Packer, in *Knowing God*, countered this theory by saying,

The kenosis theory will not stand. For, in the first place it is a speculation to which texts quoted for it do not give the least support. When Paul talks of the Son as having emptied Himself and having become poor, what he had in mind, as the context in each case shows, is the laying aside, ‘not of divine powers and attributes, but of divine glory and dignity, the glory which I had with thee before the world was’, (John 17:5) as Christ put it in His great high priestly prayer.⁹

⁷ Dunnam, Maxie. *The Communicator’s Commentary: Exodus..* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1982), 282.

⁸ Martin, R.P. *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Epistle of Paul of the Philippians*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmann Publishing Company, 1978), 100.

⁹ Packer, J.I. *Knowing God*. (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 52.

Philippians 2:8 described Jesus, the servant, as one who gave his life upon the cross. This passage along with Isaiah 42 and John 13 provided the biblical theological foundation of servant leadership, the servant of the Lord that desires justice and mercy for the poor, the servant who would serve the poor by example, and the servant who “empties” himself by having the mind of a servant, and gives His life for the poor. The next section describes the spiritual discipline of service, its practice, some examples from church history and leadership theory to illustrate its practice, and what contemporary theologians add to this discussion.

The Spiritual Discipline of Service

Richard Foster in *Spiritual Classics* described the Spiritual discipline of service as the entry to the practice of Christian servant hood. He wrote,

More than any other single way the grace of humility is worked into the lives through the discipline of service. Nothing disciplines the inordinate desires of the flesh like serving in hidden-ness. The flesh whines against service but screams against hidden service. It strains and pulls for honor and recognition.”¹⁰

Dallas Willard described the discipline in the following manner:

Service to others in the spirit of Jesus allows us the freedom of a humility that carries no burdens of appearance. It lets us be what we are: simply a particular piece of clay, who as a servant of God, happens to be here and now with the ability to do a good and needful thing for that other bit of clay there.”¹¹

Reggie McNeal describes spiritual leadership as a call to greatness. However, when spiritual leaders seek recognition for greatness, their motivation is exposed as

¹⁰ Foster, Richard. *Spiritual Classics*. (San Francisco, California: Harper Collins, 1998), 130.

¹¹ Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. (New York: Harper Collins, 1988), 184.

somewhat less than Christian. The Gospel of Mark recorded that some of Jesus' disciples' motivation in following Christ was self-serving ambition:

They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the road?' But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was to be the greatest. Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, 'If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all'. (Mark 9: 33-35)

What they were arguing about was which one of them was the greatest disciple. The disciples' concept of greatness was one of worldly ambition and self-seeking. The disciples were slow learners as found in Mark 10:35-40:

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee came to him. 'Teacher,' they said, 'we want you to do for us whatever we ask.' 'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked. They replied 'Let one of us sit at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory.' 'You don't know what you are asking.' Jesus said. 'Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?' 'We can,' they answered. Jesus said to them, 'You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right hand or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared'.

Jesus seized this opportunity to teach his disciples about true spiritual leadership that finds its greatness in service. The other disciples became indignant with James and John, but Jesus called them together and said,

'You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:41-45)

Historical Servant Leadership

Leaders that understand this principle, however, are unique and hard to come by. McNeal wrote, "Leaders who have an appropriate view of self (humility), combined with the capacity to help others (service) don't just show up in the nick of time. They are

crafted over time.”¹² He asserted that this crafting takes place as spiritual leaders develop key disciplines.

One inspiring example of servant leadership from church history was Saint Francis of Assisi. He was born to a wealthy cloth maker in the late 12th century. He was named Giovanni by his mother, but later became known as “Frenchy” or Francis because he was so good at affecting a French accent.¹³ When Francis was a young man he was marched off to the Perugian War with the other young men of Assisi. He was taken captive and was imprisoned for a year.

After his release and one-year convalescence at home, he reached a critical turning point. It was during these dark, lonely months Francis discovered an ever-growing, ever-deepening, converting grace. It was also during this time as he lived beside the nearly abandoned church of San Damiano, he heard the word of the Lord “Rebuild my church”. Francis did this at first by literally repairing the ruined walls of the San Damiano. He then undertook the greater task of rebuilding the church, the body of Christ.¹⁴

Francis had one large obstacle to overcome to answer this calling. His father Piero had greatly disapproved of his son’s new found faith and commitment to the poor. Francis had sold some cloth and a horse which technically belonged to his family. The

¹² McNeal, Reggie, *Practicing Greatness: 7 Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 6.

¹³ Almedingen, E.M. *St. Francis of Assisi* (New York: Knoff Publisher, 1967), 20-20.

¹⁴ Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1998), 99-100.

father decided to make it a legal issue to pressure his son into changing his missionary life. The case came before the Bishop of Assisi. The Bishop ordered Francis to return the money. Failure to do so would result in imprisonment. Francis response was to take the money in his pouch, and throw it to the ground in full view of the crowd. As he took off his clothes as well, he shouted, “These clothes are not mine. They were given to me. Now I tell you all that I have a Father in heaven and none other.”¹⁵

The order that Francis began, ‘the Franciscans’, was especially known for their devotion to Jesus Christ and to following his example of serving the poor. James Howell in *Servants, Misfits, and Martyrs* wrote, “Lepers came to him. No physician would touch them, but Francis treated his “brothers in Christ” with tenderness, treating their wounds, embracing and kissing those who had been ostracized by society, even building a hospital for them.”¹⁶

Francis was a good example of servant leadership as he combined the practice of servant hood and leadership of the poor. Howell cites three common themes of this practice.

1. If you are willing to serve, you have to give up something precious. Francis not only took a vow of poverty, but also gave up the approval of his family.
2. Service requires genuine solidarity with those in need. Francis embraced the lepers and lived among the poor.

¹⁵ Ibid, 55-56.

¹⁶ Howell, James C, *Servants, Misfits, and Martyrs: Saints and Their Stories* (Nashville, Tennessee: Upper Room Books, 1999), 40.

3. Throughout history the saints consistently saw Christ in the poor and the hurting.

Francis repeatedly took off his meager garments and gave them to the poor as Jesus instructed.¹⁷

Leadership theory added to the discussion of combining servant hood and leadership. Servant leadership could simply be defined as leadership in which service comes first. Robert Greenleaf in *Servant Leadership* wrote,

The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from the one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve- after leadership is established. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.”¹⁸

The gospel of Matthew recorded that “Jesus called them together and said, whoever wants to be first must be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25-28).

Ken Blanchard in *Lead Like Jesus* said that Jesus called his disciples to be servant-leaders. Blanchard emphasized that self-interest is not a characteristic of a servant leader. In fact, “self-interest is the most persistent barrier to leading like Jesus.” He wrote, “People with hearts motivated by self-interest put their own agenda, safety, status, and gratification ahead of that of those affected by their thoughts and actions.”¹⁹

The apostle Paul wrote in Philippians,

¹⁷ Ibid, 41.

¹⁸ Greenleaf, Robert, *Servant Leadership* (New York: Paulist, 1977), 13.

¹⁹ Blanchard, Ken and Phil Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus* (Nashville: W. Publishing, 2005), 40.

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in the spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than you. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.’ (Philippians 2:1-4)

Paul was speaking of the need for humility as an antidote for selfish ambition. This humility sought the good of others and actually valued them above self.

To deal with the problem of self-interest, Blanchard gave leaders an evaluation model called EGO which could stand either for Edging God Out or Exalting God Only. The leader who aspired to be an authentic servant leader would need to ask of himself/herself, “Am I a servant leader or a self-serving leader?” Blanchard detailed three distinctive behaviors that marked the difference between self-serving leaders and servant leaders. They were; how does one handle feedback, how does one handle planning for a successor, and from a personal perspective, who leads and who follows. According to Blanchard, self-serving leaders spent most of their time protecting or promoting the thing in which they have invested their self-worth such as their reputation, their competitive performance, and their position. In contrast a servant-leader grounded in God’s unconditional love would get beyond initial negative emotions and seek to find any truth and value for improving leadership. They would view their position of leadership and influence as being on loan from God to those they serve, and they would be prone to see feedback as a gift.

Servant-leaders would also plan for successors. In his book, *Transforming Leadership*, Leighton Ford noted,

Long before modern managers, Jesus was busy preparing people for the future. He wasn’t aiming to pick a crown prince, but to create a successor generation. When the time came for him to leave, He did not put on a crash program in

leadership development- the curriculum had been taught for three years in a living classroom.²⁰

Whereas self-serving leaders would simply think they should lead and others should follow, servant leaders would seek to respect the wishes of those entrusted to them with a season of influence and responsibility. Blanchard also noted that the word leader is mentioned only six times in the Bible while the term servant is mentioned 900 times.

Larry Spears, the CEO of the Greenleaf Center, described servant-leadership this way,

As we near the twentieth century, we are beginning to see that the traditional autocratic and hierarchical modes of leadership are slowly yielding to a newer model- one that attempts to simultaneously enhance the personal growth of workers and improve the caring of our many institutions through a combination of teamwork and community, personal involvement in decision making, and ethical and caring behavior. The emerging approach to leadership and service is called servant-leadership.²¹

The leadership theory views of servant leadership made the difficult link between the lifestyle of Jesus and modern business theory. The difficulty lay in one's definition of success. Jesus suffered and died upon the cross. This was a sacrifice with a clear purpose: the salvation of humanity. Leadership theory's definition of success would be a servant hood whose motive was ultimately a profitable organization. Transforming lives would be secondary. If servant hood's practice was to simply outdo the competition it would fall short of the biblical ideal.

Contemporary theology clarified the definition of biblical servant leadership.

²⁰ Ibid, 45-46.

²¹ "The Greenleaf Center for Leadership," <http://www.greenleaf.org/> (accessed May 2006).

In *The Soul of Ministry*, Ray Anderson said that an effective servant leader possessed three things: a creative vision that inspires, a delegated power that enables, and a spiritual gift for ministry. Anderson noted that servant leadership is not a “doormat concept of ministry.” Instead, the leader would be a servant of the mission of the organization. Anderson wrote, “The leader is the servant of the mission of the people of God. This mission must be perceived as the ‘vision’ that informs the goals and strategy of the people.”²² Servant leaders could be trusted to lead with vision. The second attribute of true servant leaders according to Anderson was that they could be trusted with the authority and power necessary to “prepare the way of the Lord” as servants of the vision, without also abusing that power.”²³ The true servant leader would be a “steward” of the resources needed to attain the vision. The power to carry out this vision was a delegated power. Moses was a good example of servant leadership when he responded to God’s call and brought the vision of liberation from bondage to the children of Israel. Anderson wrote, “The story of their 40 years wandering in the wilderness before they actually entered into the land under Joshua’s leadership is a case study in servant leadership using power both to discipline and give direction.”²⁴

Anderson also asserted that servant leadership should be empowered to lead by the use of spiritual gifts. The apostle Paul wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians that each Christian should expect to receive and exercise a spiritual gift. He wrote, “To each

²² Anderson, Ray S., *The Soul of Ministry: Forming Leaders for God's People* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1997), 198.

²³ Ibid, 199.

²⁴ Ibid, 200.

is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” I Corinthians 12:7 Jesus acknowledged at the beginning of his ministry that his was a spirit empowered ministry. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Luke 4:18-19 Anderson wrote, “God’s servant leader does not stand between the people and God, but stands with the people as the faithful steward, to provide discipline and correction and to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord.”²⁵

Responding to God’s call to social justice was at the heart of the practice of the spiritual discipline of service and servant leadership. God’s call to social justice had been described as the power to be the kind of people we were created to be and the power to do the works of God upon the earth. H. Richard Niebuhr in *Christ and Culture* gave us the theological view of society that best represented this type of spirituality and leadership. Niebuhr presented several models that Christians have adopted in the debate on the church’s responsibility for social order or of the need for a new separation of Christ’s followers from the world. More than half a century ago in 1949, Niebuhr presented a series of lectures at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Texas. Those lectures formed the basis for the book *Christ and Culture*. The book presents a “five-type” panoramic framework for understanding the variations among Christians and their responses to culture: Christ against Culture, the Christ of Culture, Christ above Culture, Christ and Culture in Paradox, and Christ the Transformer of Culture. It was the

²⁵ Ibid, 204.

Christ the Transformer of Culture view that resonated best with the spiritual discipline of service and servant leadership.²⁶

Niebuhr wrote of three theological convictions of this view of society. First, there was a theological conviction about creation. Niebuhr wrote,

What distinguishes conversionists from dualists is their more positive and hopeful attitude toward culture. The dualists tend so to concentrate on redemption through Christ's cross and resurrection that creation becomes for them a kind of prologue to the one mighty deed of atonement. For the conversionist, however, the creative activity of God and of Christ in God is neither a major theme, overpowered by nor overpowering the idea of atonement."²⁷

The second theological conviction of this view of culture was its understanding of the nature of man's fall from his created goodness. The conversionist agreed with the dualist in asserting a doctrine of a radical fall of man, but differs sharply in creation, and in the conditions of life in the body. "Man's good nature had become corrupted: it is not bad, as something that ought not to exist, but warped, twisted, and misdirected."²⁸

A third theological conviction of this view was the view of history which held that in God, all things were possible. History was not merely a course of human events but a dramatic interaction between God and men. For the conversionist, history was the story of God's mighty deeds and of man's responses to them. The conversionist lived somewhat less "between the times" and somewhat more in the divine "Now" than did his

²⁶ Guenther, Bruce L., "The Enduring Problem of Christ and Culture," *Direction*, 2005, <http://www.directionjournal.org/> (accessed June 2006).

²⁷ Niebuhr, H. Richard, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951), 192.

²⁸ Ibid, 194.

brother Christians.²⁹ This Christ as the Transformer of Culture believer was theologically convicted that Christians are called to do their part in transforming God's creation. Jesus said it this way in the Sermon on the Mount,

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-16)

Probably one of the best examples we have seen of this combination of the practice of the spiritual discipline of service and servant leadership was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The Civil Rights Movement began on December 5, 1955 when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a city bus to a white man. Following her arrest in Montgomery, Alabama, local black community leaders gathered and asked Ms. Parks if she would be willing to make a test case out of her arrest. She agreed. A group of ministers met on December 5th to form a new organization, called the Montgomery Improvement Association. The ministers elected a young, 26-year-old minister to be their leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. After the young man rose that night and recounted the abuses of Montgomery's black citizens, the decision was made to boycott the public buses. He told the crowd that the protest was patriotic, very much in the tradition of American democracy. King closed his speech that night with these words:

When the history books are written in the future, somebody will have to say, There lived a race of people, a black people, fleecy locks and black complexion, a people

²⁹ Ibid, 195.

who had the moral courage to stand up for their rights. And thereby they injected a new meaning into the veins of history and of civilization.”³⁰

Parks would recall, “When I headed home after Dr. King’s speech I knew we had found the right one to articulate our protest. As the weeks and months wore on, it became clear to me that we had found our Moses, and that he would surely lead us to the promised land of liberty and justice for all.”³¹ Grounded in the theology of service and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a servant leader in the manner of his Savior, he sought to transform a society. His witness still lives on today.

This first section was an exploration into the foundations of servant leadership and its theology. The passages that formed the basis of this exploration were Isaiah 42 which focused on the Servant of the Lord, the example of Christ as servant in John 13, and the mind of a servant found in Philippians Chapter Two. These passages described the biblical view of servant hood. The spiritual discipline of service when linked with leadership became servant leadership.

Ministry to the Poor

An exploration into ministry to the poor was utilized to focus how this type of leadership is effective in serving the poor. This section was framed by three theological questions that addressed the issue of serving the poor. They were:

1. How was the image of Christ evident in the poor?

³⁰ Carson, Clayborne and Kris Shepard, *A Call to Conscience* (New York: Warner Books, 2002), 4.

³¹ Ibid, 5.

2. How were the poor viewed as neighbor?

3. How was God experienced through obedience to His call to serve the poor?

An examination of biblical passages relevant to each question was made, and examples from church history, as well as an exploration of contemporary theology to gave insight into the discussion.

How Was the Image of Christ Evident in the Poor?

In Matthew Jesus told the story of the parable of the sheep and the goats. The intent of this passage was to provide a description of the Last Judgment.

When the Son of Man comes in glory, and all the angels with him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on the right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father: take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. (Matthew 25: 31-36)

This passage revealed the Son of Man coming in glory, sitting on His throne. His role was that of judge and His judgment was for all nations. Myron Augsburg in his commentary on Matthew wrote "The word-picture (used here) was understood in the Middle East, for shepherds tended sheep and goats together. The parable is symbolic of the good people as sheep and the goats symbolic of the evil."³² The judge would separate the sheep (those who were deemed 'good') from the goats (those who were deemed 'bad'). The judgment was based on the church's involvement in social outreach. The

³² Augsburg, Myron. *The Communicator's Commentary: Matthew* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1982), 283.

judgment identified Christ with the needy so that a deed of love “to one of the least of these, my brethren: was a deed of love for Christ. Sins of omission were cited as serious. Those that ignored the call to serve the poor would experience the judgment and wrath of God: “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life” (Matthew 25:46). This view of the image of Christ in the poor has had some inspiring examples from church history that have experienced this vision.

One of those examples was John Wesley who left us an inspiring example of how to be “Christ” to the poor. He also left us a system that could accomplish this. Dr.

Richard Heitzenrater in *The Poor and the People called Methodists* wrote:

The general outlines of the early Methodists work with the poor are well-known and often repeated. Methodists gathered clothes and food to send to the poor; opened free medical clinics to draw in the sick from the streets; and stood in the street corners and begged for the poor. The reasons the early Methodists developed such programs are often ignored or misunderstood, and the context, the concept of poverty, and the nature of the problem in 18th century England-is largely unknown to most Methodists today.³³

The poverty problem that Wesley dealt with began in the 16th century when England experienced poor harvests which consequently led to generally hard times. At that time, officials developed a public program paid for by taxes to give aide to the elderly, the sick, widows, orphans, and the disabled. It was paid for by a public tax. As the 17th century began, officials created a set of laws called the “Poor Laws.” These laws were passed by the rich to deal with the poor. They implemented a “three-pronged national strategy to deal with the poor. The idle and able-bodied poor were put to work or

³³ Heitzenrater, 15.

punished, the infirm and impotent who could not work were given cash support, as begging and casual almsgiving were banned.”³⁴

These Poor Laws were motivated by the desire for Christian charity and moral reform, and also a rising concern that a public policy was needed that would focus on social and economic matters. A local system of taxation was put into place to pay for it, but this system failed because it was not uniform to all areas. Ultimately, continuing hardship and lack of available work made it hard for the “laboring poor” to make enough money to support their families. It was illegal for them to move out of their parish in search of work. Consequently, “workhouses, cottage industries, and other means of supporting local employment of the poor” arose and were paid for by the poor tax.³⁵ The Poor Tax was usually paid by those who made over 30 pounds a year. Those who made less than 30 pounds received the benefits of it.

Heitzenrater wrote that “by the 18th century, the persistent attempts of the government to provide assistance to those in the lower economic levels of society had created an “us and them mindset.”³⁶ It was at this time that John Wesley and the Methodists came to the forefront. Wesley did not consider the poor to be lazy as many of the upper class did and worked to counteract that idea.

Wesley had a fairly constant definition of what it meant to be poor, saying that they were the ones who “lacked the necessities of life.”³⁷ To him they were those that did

³⁴ Ibid, 17.

³⁵ Ibid, 20.

³⁶ Ibid, 23.

³⁷ Ibid, 27.

not have enough to eat, decent clothes to wear, or suitable places to live. He never referred to them as the “homeless”. His guiding principle in dealing with them was the Golden Rule found in the book of Matthew which said, “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the prophets” (Matthew 7: 12). He laid this principle out in a sermon:

We would that all men should love and esteem us, and behave toward us according to justice, mercy, and truth....Now then, let us walk by the same rule: let us do unto all as we would they should do to us. Let us love and honor all men. Let justice, mercy, and truth govern all our minds and actions.³⁸

The poor responded to his message by joining his societies and filling his pews.

In time Wesley implemented this message in five ways:

- He communalized the program of assistance - his people were expected to help each other in the community of faith. They were expected to contribute to connectional funds that cut across the boundaries of societies, parishes, towns, and cities.
- He broadened the concept of community to include everyone, from the top to the bottom of the economic scale. No longer was there an “us-and-them” dichotomy.
- He relativized (reclassified) the concept of poverty, ignoring the idea of an absolute or quantifiable poverty line. He viewed deprivation in terms of relative needs based on a sliding scale.

³⁸ Ibid, 28.

- He universalized the concept of charity so that no one was exempt from responsibility for assisting the needy. Everyone could be a Christian neighbor, even the widow with her mite.
- He theologized the motivation for charitable activities. His basic goal was for Methodists to imitate the life of Christ, not to improve the national economy.

These five principles allowed John Wesley and the early Methodists to consistently uphold the “golden rule” in serving the poor, and to remember God’s love for all people.

Thomas Torrance wrote in *Service in Jesus Christ*, “the great characteristic of all Christian service is that while it is certainly fulfilled under the constraint of the love of Christ it is a service commanded by Him and laid upon every baptized member of His body.”³⁹ In the New Testament there were two principal terms used to speak of servants of Christ, slaves and waiters. Torrance asserted that the servants of Christ were not their own masters, but belonged to Another. He cited three distinctive features that Jesus, in the form of a servant, exhibited.

First, he served God in His mercy and man in his need, with the secret of the cross in his heart. Jesus was not called to be a doctor but a Savior. He fulfilled this ministry in meekness and lowliness in order to bear the onslaught of evil upon him self and so to get to the heart of it. Christ’s healing was more than that of a kind doctor treating a disease but one who was struggling against evil. This service of mercy could not be rendered apart from divine sorrow for the sin of the world.

³⁹ Torrance, Thomas. *Theological Foundations for Ministry Selected Readings for a Theology of the Church in Ministry*, ed. Ray T. Anderson and T. Clark Edinburgh (: ,), 714.

Second, He ministered the mercy of God to man at the sharpest point of need and misery, where he (man) was not only unmerciful but resented mercy, and was therefore bitterly hostile to this ministry. Torrance cited the unconditional love of service by Jesus Christ. Regardless of the response of those being served, Christ loved and served. Torrance wrote “Such was the mercy ministered by Jesus, triumphant mercy which drew out human unthankfulness and resentment to their ultimate point where he limited it by absorbing it himself, and put a final end to it in the very death which it inflicted on Him—mercy that cannot be defeated.”⁴⁰

Third, Jesus carried out His ministry as a humble servant on earth in utter reliance upon his Father in heaven, refusing to do anything except what He had been sent to do and refusing to discharge His mission except in weakness and selflessness of pure service. The true servant of Jesus does not compromise the mission under the pressure of some authority or the seduction of prestige, for fear of betraying the one who has called him/her to service. Jesus warned his disciples of these temptations when he washed their feet at the Last Supper.

How was the image of Christ evident in the poor? The vision came to his followers when they chose to faithfully serve him by serving others. This vision for service came through obedience and a conviction that serving “the least of these” was indeed serving Christ.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ibid, ed., 727.

⁴¹ Ibid, ed., 726.

Viewing the Poor as Neighbors

There were two primary biblical passages that helped to answer the theological question “How were the poor viewed as neighbors? They were Leviticus 25 which described the Year of Jubilee and Luke 10: 25-37 which was the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

Leviticus 25 the Year of Jubilee

The Year of Jubilee was described in the book of Leviticus:

Count off seven Sabbaths of years- seven times seven years- so that the seven Sabbaths of years amount to a period of forty-nine years. Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: each of you is to return to his family property and each to its own clan. The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you: do not sow or reap what grows of itself or harvest the unintended vines. For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you: eat only what is taken directly from the fields. (Leviticus 25: 8-12)

The year of Jubilee was meant to be celebrated every 50 years. It included canceling all debts, freeing all slaves, and returning to its original owners all lands that had been sold.

There is no indication that this Year of Jubilee was carried out, but the intention was to view the poor as their neighbor, and to seek to have a society without permanent poverty.

Christopher Wright emphasized the equitable land distribution of this special year:

The clear intention was that land use should be distributed as widely as possible. Later on, great royal estates developed, the poor were evicted for debt, and a few oppressors gathered enormous blessings. All this was vehemently condemned by the prophets. Such injustice was a major reason for God’s judgment on Israel, which took the form of expulsion from the land and exile in Babylon.”⁴²

⁴² Wright, 312-313.

The Year of Jubilee was a mandate to treat the poor with compassion. The poor were to be neighbors.

Luke 10: 25- 37 the Parable of the Good Samaritan

In the New Testament the Parable of the Good Samaritan gave insight into viewing the poor as neighbor. The story began with an expert in the law asking Jesus a question, intending to test him.

On one occasion an expert in the Law stood up to test Jesus. ‘Teacher,’ he asked ‘What must I do to inherit eternal life?’ ‘What is written in the Law?’ He replied. ‘How do you read it?’ He answered, “Love the Lord with all your strength and with all your mind, and ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ‘You have answered correctly,’ Jesus replied. ‘Do this and you shall live.’ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’ (Luke 10: 25 -29)

Jesus asked him what was written in the law. The reply from the man was to quote from Deuteronomy 6: 5 and Leviticus 19:8 “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind and love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus assured him that if this was done he would live, but the man wanted to justify himself and asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus’ response to this question was the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10: 25-37. The Jericho road was a notoriously dangerous road to travel. The route from Jerusalem to Jericho was a descent of 3000 feet, which made it a haven for robbers to hide and attack travelers. The poor man was robbed, beaten, and left half-dead. Two religious men, a priest and a Levite, “passed by on the other side.” Both were risking ceremonial defilement if they touched a dead man. Leviticus 21:1 When Jesus introduced the Samaritan in the story the Jews probably thought the real villain had arrived. There was a deep hatred between Jews and Samaritans. The Jews saw themselves as pure

descendants of Abraham, while the Samaritans were a mixed race produced when the Jews from the Northern Kingdom intermarried with other peoples after Israel's exile. Surprisingly it was the Samaritan that took time to care for the poor man. He put him on his animal, took him to the inn, and paid his expenses.⁴³ "Which of these three do you think was neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" asked Jesus (verse 36). The man identified the Samaritan as the one who was the better neighbor, and then Jesus exhorted him to "go and do likewise" (verse 37).

The Example Set by Catherine and William Booth

Church history gave two great examples of how to view the poor in the examples of Catherine and William Booth who together founded the Salvation Army. Catherine Booth lived in 19th century England. She was an inspiring example of a Christian whose life was very effective in ministering to the poor. While Catherine's husband William was assigned to Gateshead, England by the Methodist Church, the Methodist's preacher's wife had an epiphany one day on the way to Sunday services at Bethsaida Chapel. On that day, she noticed many women and men loitering around the crowded streets without any apparent sense of direction, and she was stirred to do something about it. She overcame her natural reluctance to speak to strangers and began to invite these people to services. She also began to visit them in their homes and developed a growing love of the poor. As she made more and more of these visits, she discovered that many men had severe drinking problems. One such visit occurred after she noticed a woman standing outside and invited her to services. The woman replied that her husband would never

⁴³ Tasker, 187-190.

agree to that because he was such a “mean drunkard.”⁴⁴ Catherine offered to go and speak with him, and to the surprise of all involved, he not only received her well, but was very willing to talk with her at length about their family situation. He also promised to sign a pledge of abstinence, “ever a cause of top priority on Catherine’s agenda.”⁴⁵

On a visit to a young mother that had just given birth to twins, Booth found her in such dire straits that she immediately set out to help. The woman was lying on a pile of rags with only a crust of bread to eat and no one to care for her or her newborn babies. Catherine bathed the infants and did for the mother what she could.⁴⁶ These and other similar incidents prompted her to make visiting the poor and sparing no effort to help them a “standard of service” for the officers in her army.”⁴⁷ Catherine’s husband William also shared this compassion for the poor.

In 1890, General William Booth wrote *In Darkest England*. The book took its title from Henry Stanley’s *In Darkest Africa*, which told of his expedition across Africa to find Dr. Stanley Livingston. Booth explained the similarities in the two books. He wrote,

Just as in *In Darkest Africa*, it is only a part of the evil and misery that comes from the superior race who invade the forest to enslave and massacre its miserable inhabitants, so with us, much of the misery of those whose lot we are considering arises from their own habits. Drunkenness and all manner of uncleanness, moral and physical abound.”⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Green, Roger J., *Catherine Booth* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996), 92.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 93.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 93-96.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 94.

⁴⁸ Booth, *Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890), 14.

Booth was most concerned with “the submerged tenth.” These were the poor and the destitute of England. He was precise in his description of this tenth of the population.

He said:

In the denizens of Darkest England, for whom I appeal, is:

1. Those who, having no capital or income of their own, would in a month be dead from sheer starvation were they exclusively dependent upon the money earned by their own work
2. Those that by their utmost exertions are unable to attain the regulation allowance of food which the law prescribes as indispensable even for the worst criminals in our goals.”⁴⁹

William Booth’s book revealed a thorough plan for meeting the needs of the poor of England, a plan that was both practical and attainable to implement. Booth’s heart reached out to those on the verge of being or who were in despair. He wanted to give them hope and Christian love in action. He called his plan “his scheme.” It consisted of the formation of these people into self-helping and self-sustaining communities, each being a kind of co-operative society, or patriarchal family, governed and disciplined on the principals which had already proven so effective for the Salvation Army. The communities or colonies were of three types: The City Colony, The Farm Colony, and The Over-Sea Colony.⁵⁰

The City Colony was established in the very center of the ocean of misery where a number of institutions acted as Harbors of Refuge for all who had been shipwrecked in life, character, or circumstances. The purpose of these Harbors was to gather up the poor destitute creatures and supply them with the necessities of life, food, shelter, and

⁴⁹ Ibid, 18.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 90-93.

temporary employment. If the poor then showed sincerity, industry, and honesty, they were passed on to the Colony of the second class.

The Farm Colony consisted of a settlement of the Colonists on an estate, in whatever culture where employment and support were available. Booth wrote, “As the race from the Country to the City has been the cause of so much distress we have to battle with, we propose to find a substantial part of the remedy by transferring these same people back to the country, that is back again to ‘the Garden!’”⁵¹ This was where Booth planned to put emphasis on the reformation of character of these people. He felt that working and living on the Farm would restore health and character. Large numbers would gradually be ready for employment either in their own calling or in farming, but Booth had a third option for the rest.

The Over-Sea Colony recognized that England had colonies in South Africa, Canada, Western Australia, and elsewhere. In these colonies, there were millions of acres of useful land, capable of supporting this population in health and comfort. As Booth made his plea for workers and financial support, he wrote,

I am now 61 years of age. I feel already something of the pressure which led the dying Emperor of Germany to say, ‘I have no time to be weary.’ If I am to see the accomplishment in any degree of these life long hopes, I must be enabled to embark upon the enterprise without delay, and with the world-wide burden constantly upon me in connection with the universal mission of our Army, I cannot be expected to struggle in this matter alone.”⁵²

Catherine and William Booth’s Christian faith and ethics were shining examples of how to view the poor as neighbor.

⁵¹ Ibid, 92.

⁵² Ibid, 282.

Theologian Karl Barth also addressed this “Concept of Neighbor” in *Ethics*. He shared five criteria that help us to know if we are allowing God’s Word to help us live as true neighbors.

- The neighbor is a criterion for the command of God itself. - If we are covenant partners with God, then that covenant automatically binds us to our neighbor as well, because we are all created by God.
- The neighbor is a criterion of conduct. - As covenant partners with God we will overcome our tendency to be self-centered and think of each other realizing that we have a responsibility to each other, and especially the poor.
- The neighbor is a criterion for repentance.” - As covenant partners with God and each other we are responsible for each others’ sin. We cannot “abandon” each other to sin and its fate but should pray for each other and seek reconciliation with our neighbor.
- The neighbor becomes a criterion for what is lawful and right for me to do.” - As covenant partners with each other, there may be times when what is right for me to do ‘legally’ in others eyes, may not be the right way to do for my brother. Ultimately we will do the best for each other, no matter what the world says is right.
- The neighbor is a criterion of Christ for me.” - As covenant partners with Christ, we must see Christ in each one, not just those who carry the name “Christian.” We can not pick and choose those whom we would see Christ in, but rather be open to seeing Him in those whom *He* chooses.⁵³

Catherine and William Booth were two excellent examples of how to view the poor as neighbors. They were willing to serve the homeless and in the process overcame the “us and them” mentality. They responded to the poor as though they were Christ and greeted them with welcome and love.

⁵³ Barth, Karl, *Ethics*, ed. Braun Dietrich (New York: Seabury, 1981), 350, 421, 190, 376, 335, 432-434.

Social Justice Tradition of Christian Spirituality

Social Justice Tradition of Christian Spirituality was one of Richard Foster's six primary Christian spiritualities in *Streams of Living Water*. The other spiritualities were the Contemplative Tradition which dealt with discovering the prayer-filled life, the Holiness Tradition that dealt with discovering the virtuous life, the Charismatic Tradition that dealt with discovering the spirit-empowered life, the Evangelical Tradition that focused on discovering the word-centered life, and the Incarnational Tradition which dealt with discovering the sacramental life. Of all the spiritualities, however, Foster explained that it was the practice of the Social Justice Tradition that could especially transform communities.⁵⁴

Foster noted that the Social Justice Tradition embraced three great themes based on three Hebrew words: *mispat*, *hesed*, and *shalom*.⁵⁵

Mispat

Mispat meant justice. God executed justice (*mispat*) for the orphans and the widows and loved the alien, and gave them food and clothing (Deuteronomy 10:18). Psalm 103:6 said that "The Lord works righteousness and justice (*mispat*) for *all* who are oppressed. The themes of justice could be seen in the year of Jubilee. It was a system of compassionate justice that God had decreed and that consisted of the gleaning of fields

⁵⁴ Foster, Richard J., *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1998), 23, 59, 97, 135, 185, 235.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 167-172.

and the cancellation of debts.⁵⁶ However, political leaders in Israel eventually ignored it and continued with their system of harsh injustice. In response to this, the prophet Isaiah called for a fast that would weaken the bonds of injustice. The mandate was not met with the proper reactions, and Isaiah responded by saying,

Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood (Isaiah 58: 6-8)?

It seemed, then, that because justice was important for all that the poor should not be forgotten.

Hesed

The second great theme of the Social Justice Tradition was hesed, which meant compassion. God's hesed was "from everlasting to everlasting" declared Psalm 103:17. It was a "steadfast love that endures forever" (Psalm 106:1). The law of gleaning detailed in the book of Leviticus was a good example of hesed. The farmers were to leave some of the crop along the borders and the grain that fell on the ground during harvest so that the poor could gather it (Leviticus 19:19-20). Another example was in the giving and taking of a pledge. A widow's coat could not be taken as a pledge because of her poverty (Deuteronomy 24:17), nor could a millstone because it was the person's livelihood

⁵⁶ *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1987), 602.

(Deuteronomy 24:10-11). Hesed was even extended to livestock (Exodus 23:12). The theme of ‘hesed’ was compassion to all people and all creatures in society.⁵⁷

Shalom

Shalom was the third great theme and meant wholeness, unity, and balance. The vision of Shalom began and ended the Bible. In creation God brought order out of chaos and in Revelation John wrote of the New Jerusalem. Foster wrote” Economically and socially, the vision of shalom meant a caring and consideration for all peoples. The greed of the rich is tempered by the need of the poor.”⁵⁸ The healing wholeness that shalom represented was represented in Isaiah with the words “They shall beat their sword into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isaiah 2:24).

The story of Amos was a deeply challenging portrayal of the Social Justice Tradition that was the compassionate life. The prophet Amos insisted that social righteousness was absolutely central to a life that was pleasing to God. Amos was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees, yet he exercised his ministry in the most sophisticated cities of his time: Samaria, Bethel, and Gilgal. The trumpet call of Amos was a single note – justice. Amos 2:6-8 explained,

This is what the Lord says: For three sins of Gaza, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because she took captive whole communities and sold them to

⁵⁷ Foster, 170.

⁵⁸ Foster, Richard J., *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*, 171.

Edom, I will send fire upon the walls of Gaza that will consume her fortresses. I will destroy the king of Ashdod and the one who holds the scepter in Ashkelon. I will turn my hand against Ekron, till the last of the Philistines is dead says the sovereign Lord.”

All of these acts of injustice had a common denominator - the abuse of power. Power was being used to manipulate, control, and ultimately destroy people. Amos responded by condemning these abuses of power. Amos also took the merchants and business leaders to task for their theft, graft and much more. In Amos 8:4-6, he said,

Hear this; you that trample on the needy, and bring ruin the poor of the land, saying, ‘When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain; and the Sabbath so that we may offer wheat for sale? We will make the ephah small and the shekel great, and practice deceit with false balances, buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and selling the sweepings of the wheat.

The prophet’s concern was the oppression of the poor, but there was more.

Amos was known for his condemnation of Israel’s vain worship of God and his call for justice. He wrote,

I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream. (Amos 5: 21-24)

Foster reiterated this by saying, “God demands something more revolutionary than festivals and sacrifices and worship songs. And that ‘something more’ is social righteousness: impartiality in judicial decisions, equity in business dealings, justice for the poor and the oppressed.”⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Ibid, 150.

One example of the practice of Social Justice Tradition was Quaker John Woolman who God so powerfully used in leading the Quakers to take a stand against the institution of slavery. Woolman's heart was touched as a young man when he worked as a clerk in a store. In his journal he wrote,

My employer, having a Negro woman, sold her, and desired me to write the bill of sale, the man being waiting who bought her. The thing was sudden: and though I felt uneasy at the thoughts of writing an instrument of slavery for one of my fellow-creatures, yet I remembered that I was hired by the year, that it was my master who directed me to do it.”⁶⁰

Woolman told his employer that he believed slave-keeping was evil and he could not write the bill of sale. Woolman later led the Quakers to be freed from the institution of slavery at their yearly meeting in Philadelphia in 1758. The Quakers also asked slaveholders to reimburse their slaves for their time in bondage. The spiritual leadership displayed by Woolman demonstrated his compassionate view of the poor as neighbor.

Experiencing God through Answering His Call to Serve the Poor

When God's call to serve the poor and the homeless was heard, a decision had to be made. The biblical examples of Abram and Sarai, Moses, and Esther showed how to this decision could be made in faith and trust, and followed by action.

Genesis 12- The Call of Abram

While Abram was still living in Ur, the Lord spoke to him. Abram and Sarai received a call to leave their familiar and beloved land of Ur. God wanted them to follow Him and to trust His promises.

⁶⁰ Woolman, John, *The Journal of John Woolman and a Plea for the Poor* (New York: Carol, 1961), 14.

The Lord said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you'. (Genesis 12: 1-3)

God had revealed to him this great plan for his and Sarai's life. It would be the beginning of a new nation. God's call came with promises of the greatness of blessing and of cursing those who did not support him (Abram). Stuart Briscoe in his commentary on Genesis writes "This revelation on God's part necessitated "recognition" on Abram's part. In some way that is not described to us in the Scripture, Abram arrived at the necessary conclusion 'that what he had promised to perform' (Romans 4:21) on that basis he moved in faith."⁶¹ God extended the call to Abram and Abram responded with faith "So Abram left, as the Lord had told him: and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he set out from Haran" (Genesis 12:4). Abram experienced God as he answered God's call to serve. He answered this call by giving up the familiar and following God's call to the unknown. The result of Abram's obedience to this call was the establishment of a covenant nation of God's chosen people.

Exodus 3 - The Call of Moses

In chapter three of Exodus Moses was living in exile in Midian. He was tending his father-in-law Jethro's flocks and had taken them to Horeb, the mountain of God. It was on that mountain that he heard God calling. He took off his sandals at God's

⁶¹ Briscoe, D. Stuart, *The Communicator's Commentary: Genesis* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987), 127.

command because he was standing on holy ground and then listened as God instructed him to seek the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery.

The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of people in Egypt, I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians ... So now, go I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 3: 7-8, 10).

Maxie Dunnam in his commentary on Exodus wrote,

“Note two power- packed truths here. First, God called Moses by name. This is a personal God with whom we are dealing. He looks, he sees, he knows. One recalls that vivid word of the prophet Isaiah, when God reminded His people of his personal covenant relationship with them. But now says the Lord , who created you, O Jacob, And he who formed you; I have called you by name’ you are mine Isaiah 43:1 Second, God identified Himself in order that Moses would know that he was not meeting an unknown God.”⁶²

Moses was frightened by the call. He made excuses. Who was he to go before Pharaoh? He was not a good speaker. Yet God assured him that he would be with him. God had seen the misery of his people who had been crying out to him. He extended the call to Moses and Moses answered in spite of his reservations and fear. The result of Moses’ obedience to God’s call was a nation delivered from slavery.

The Call of Esther

Queen Esther, even though a Jewess, had a comfortable life as the wife of King Xerxes of Persia. However, she chose to risk it all to stand up for her Jewish nation when Haman schemed to destroy it. Her surrogate father, Mordecai came to her with a plea.

⁶² Dunnam, 65.

He sent back this answer: ‘Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at time, relief and the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to the royal position for such a time as this?’ (Esther 4: 13-14)

Mordecai’s argument is brutal in its clarity. Death awaited her whether she approached the king or not, therefore she had nothing to lose. If she failed then help would come from somewhere else. But she could be a chosen instrument of God to help her nation in this time of crisis. Esther fasted and prayed for three days and decided to answer the call for her people in need. The result of her obedience to God’s call was the saving of her nation.

In *Companions in Christ*, Gerrit Dawson described these heroes in the faith as people that were “radically available.” He made the observation about God’s call and our response:

Many stories in the Bible describe how people are called to particular service. In each case, there is a basic call around which all the other details of life swirl like harmony around a strong melody. Persons are to abandon their lives completely into God’s hands. There is no way around this. A test precedes any consideration of what you are to do in this world: Have you let go of everything to give yourself to God? Again and again, the people we encounter in the Bible are called to radical availability.”⁶³

Mother Teresa

A great example from the 20th century of a servant leader that served the poor with compassion was Mother Teresa. Agnes Bojaxhiu was born August 26, 1910 in Serbia, Yugoslavia. She and her parents belonged to an Albanian minority in that

⁶³ Dawson, Gerrit, *Companions in Christ – Participants Book – a Small Group Experience in Spiritual Formation* (Nashville, Tennessee: Upper Room Books, 2001), 180.

country. Agnes Studied at the State secondary school in Croatia and heard about India and the work of the Catholic missionaries in West Bengal. It was not before Agnes' dream was to be a missionary in India as well. Learning that the Loreto nuns from Ireland worked in Calcutta, she went to Dublin to apply and join them. On September 26, 1928, Agnes left her home to go to Ireland. She was well received and finally on January 6, 1929 she arrived in Calcutta and was sent to the novitiate of the Loreto nuns at Darjeeling at the foot of the Himalayas.

She was sent to teach at St. Mary's High School in Entally, Calcutta which served primarily middle-class Bengali girls. She later became headmistress of the school. On September 10, 1946 she traveled by train to Darjeeling. Biographers Jaya Chaliha and Edward le Joly write "Mother Teresa was told by Jesus "I want you to serve me among the poorest of the poor."⁶⁴ This inspiration changed her life. She knew she had to leave Loreto and devote her life to work and pray among the very poor, in obedience to the call of Jesus.

As the number of young ladies wishing to work with Mother Teresa increased it became clear that God wanted her to begin a new order. In 1950 Mother Teresa began the Missionaries of Charity. James Howell wrote:

While her focus was never on "how many" the growth of her ministry was unparalleled. In 1948 she was an army of one. By 1950 she had seven sisters, by 1960 she had 119, by 1970 she had 585, and by her death in 1997 over a thousand. By 1980 she had started 140 schools in the slums, housed 4, 000 children in 70 homes 1,000 adoptions per year, operated 81 homes for the dying and 670 mobile clinics treating millions and fed 50,000 a day at 300 meal sites."⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Mother Teresa, *The Joy in Loving* (New York: Penguin Group Publisher, 1997, 14.

⁶⁵ Howell, 38.

The example of Mother Teresa's obedience to God's call upon her life gave her great insight into ministry to the poor. Mother Teresa spoke these words concerning the poor.

When a poor person dies of hunger, it has not happened because God did not take care of him or her. It has happened because neither you nor I wanted to give that person what he or she needed. We have refused to be instruments of love in the hands of God to give the poor a piece of bread, to offer them a dress with which to ward off the cold. It has happened because we did not recognize Christ when, once more, he appeared under the guise of pain, identified with a man numb from the cold, dying of hunger, when he came in a lonely human being, in a lost child in search of a home.⁶⁶

Mother Teresa lived and spoke of the spiritual dimension of her life of serving the poor.

If our work were just to wash and feed and give medicines to the sick, the center would have closed a long time ago. The most important thing in our centers is the opportunity we are offered to reach souls.⁶⁷

Henry Blackaby in *Experiencing God* detailed many Biblical examples of men and women of faith that heard God's call to service, and experienced a deeper faith in Him as they obeyed that call. He described exactly what God's call is "Servants of God do what God directs. They obey him. The servant does not have the option of deciding whether or not he wants to obey. Choosing not to obey is rebellion, and such disobedience will bring serious consequences."⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Mother Teresa, *In My Own Words* (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publishing, 1997), 25.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 109.

⁶⁸ Blackaby, Henry T. and Claude V. King, *Experiencing God: How to Live the Full Adventure of Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 248.

Randy Maddox examined the early Methodists view of visiting the poor as a means of grace and the sanctification of believers. He wrote:

When one surveys Wesley's writings with this specific issue in mind (ministry to the poor) it is striking how consistently Wesley connected engagement in ministry to and with the poor, often under the heading of "works of mercy" to the existence or retention of the sanctified life.⁶⁹

In Wesley's sermon "The Character of a Methodist" (1742) he offered the following emphases as characteristic of the Wesleyan movement:

- By Salvation (the Methodist) means holiness of heart and life... We do not place the whole of religion (as too many do, God knoweth either in doing no harm, or in doing good, or in using the ordinances of God...
- What then is the mark? .. a Methodist is one who has the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him." on who loves God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength"
- And while he thus always exercises his love, this commandment is written in his heart, that "he who loveth God, loves his brother also."
- His obedience is in proportion to his love, the source from whence it flows. And therefore, loving God with all his heart, he serves him with all his strength...
- Lastly, as he has time, he "does good unto all men" – unto neighbors, and strangers, friends, and enemies. And that in every possible kind; not only to their bodies, by "feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those that are sick or in prison" but much more does he labour to do good to their souls, as of the ability which God giveth.⁷⁰

Wesley and the early Methodist's theology of Gospel poverty was especially expressed through the hymns of Charles Wesley, John's brother. S.T. Kimbrough Jr. in

⁶⁹ Heitzenrater, 65.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 65.

his study of the Wesleyan theology of the poor found in Charles Wesley's poetry and hymnody three principles on the character of a Methodist and the role of the poor.

1. The poor bore the Spirit's character and were marked by distinguished grace.

Charles Wesley wrote:

The poor I to the rich prefer
If with thine eyes I see:
To bear the spirit's character
The poor are chose by Thee:
The poor in every age and place
Thou dost, O God, approve,
To mark with thy distinguished grace,
T'inrich with faith and love."

2. The poor are the body of Christ. Charles wrote:

Members of his Church we know
The poor his body are:
All the goods he had below
They should his garments share.

To declare the poor to be the body of Christ was to include them in the family of faith and welcome them to the Lord's Supper.

3. The poor fulfilled a vicarious role as Christ's representatives on earth.

Service to the poor was described by Charles Wesley:

What to them (the poor) with right intent
Truly. Faithfully is given
We have to our Savior lent,
Laid up for ourselves in heaven.⁷¹

Wesley viewed ministry to the poor as a call to be obeyed and as lending to the Lord.

⁷¹ Ibid, 102-103.

In searching for the best foundation on which to build a homeless ministry in a small rural town, it became clear that an understanding of the practice of the spiritual discipline of service was imperative. It was also clear that an understanding of the practice of authentic Christian spiritual leadership was needed. This chapter has reviewed the theological and biblical basis for these understandings in order to provide that foundation.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Three Areas of Importance

The literature that was reviewed for this thesis project was in three areas. They were: 1) the complexity of homelessness, 2) spiritual formation, and 3) leadership theory and practice. The first area of literature focused on the problems communities, (particularly small towns) face in serving the homeless and the poor. The second and third areas of literature dealt with the solution, or the spiritual resources needed to effectively serve in Christ's name.

The Complexity of Homelessness

Two areas of importance emerged as the literature on homelessness was reviewed. The first was that homelessness is a complex and difficult problem to address. People were homeless for many different reasons. Some of the reasons were poverty, joblessness, drug addictions, mental illness, and mental and physical abuse. Even the definition of homelessness made a significant difference, especially in regard to the level of importance that was assigned to it. Kenneth Kusmer in, *Down and Out, On the Road: The Homeless in American History* said that if we limit the definition to strictly being without a place to live, we, "seriously underestimate the level of homelessness in society."¹

¹ Kusmer, 4.

Sociologist Nels Anderson gave a broader view of a homeless person as a, destitute man, woman or youth, either a resident in the community or a transient, who is without domicile. Such a person may have a home in another community, or relatives in the local community, but is for the time detached and will not or cannot return.”²

This definition gave much more flexibility in identifying the homeless, and spoke to its complex, transitory nature.

This complex and transitory nature made it difficult to estimate the number of homeless in America, however. Christopher Jencks in *The Homeless*, wrote that in the 1980s, the United States Census Bureau counted the homeless population by making lists of “dwelling units, and then trying to determine how many people lived in each unit. They did not try to count those who lived in bus stations, subways, abandoned buildings, doorways, or dumpsters.”³ However, because of the lack of concrete numbers, and because homelessness was becoming a political issue, journalists and legislators began turning to advocates for the homeless for these numbers instead.

One such advocate was Mitch Snyder. In the late 1970s, he estimated that there were one million homeless. In 1982, he teamed up with Mary Ellen Hombs to write *Homelessness in America: A Forced March to Nowhere*. Their research raised the estimated number to between two and three million.⁴ These numbers became widely accepted even without proper proof, and this prompted the Reagan administration to call on the Department of Housing and Urban Development to come up with some numbers

² Ibid.

³ Jencks, Christopher. *The Homeless* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 1.

⁴ Ibid.

of its own. After some researching, HUD produced its estimate of between 250,000 and 350,000.⁵ When asked about the tremendous discrepancy between the two estimates, Snyder told television personality Ted Koppel, “Everybody said we want a number... We got on the phone, we made a lot of calls, we talked to a lot of people, and we said, ‘Okay’, here are your numbers.”⁶ Snyder continued to use his numbers rather than the HUD numbers because he felt the media and the public would pay more attention to the bigger numbers. Such was the case according to *Helping America’s Homeless*. Its authors from the Urban Institute Press in Washington D.C. wrote, “The first question most people ask about homelessness is, ‘How many people are homeless?’ In asking, they really are probing, ‘Is this problem big enough for me to worry about?’”⁷

With that in mind, the Urban Training Institute began work to formulate its own numbers. Numbers were derived from doing a one-week estimate as opposed to the normal single 24 hour period done by others. The Institute did not go to the streets and other non-shelter locations, but did go to shelters, soup kitchens, and other meal distributors. There, people were interviewed to find out where they slept and where they got food. This gave analysts information to do two very important things: They were to eliminate duplication among people who used both meal programs and shelters, and calculate a per week estimate of homelessness. By using this methodology, the Institute did a study that numbered people using homeless assistance programs during an average

⁵ Ibid, 2.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Aron, Laudan Y., Martha Burt, Edgar Lee, and Jesse Valente. *Helping America's Homeless* (Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 2001), 23.

week in October. In November 1996, they found that there were 444,000 homeless people in the United States.⁸ The breakdown of their count was as follows:

- Family Status: 148,000 were living with a family and 296,000 were single adults.
- Urban-Rural Status: 308,000 lived in the city, 94,000 lived in the suburban/urban fringe, and 41,000 lived in rural areas.⁹

The institute also did an additional study in February 1996, since February was traditionally a month when the homeless were in greater need because of cold weather. That study raised the annual number of homeless to 842,000 in total.¹⁰

More recently, the National Alliance to End Homelessness estimated that there were between 700,000 - 800,000 homeless people on any given night in the United States. They also estimated that over the course of a year, there were between 2.5 million and 3.5 million people that experienced homelessness in this country.¹¹ The Alliance estimated that based on their research, the homeless population in the United States was 50 percent families and 50 percent single people. They made the following assertion that, “Most families become homeless because they are having a housing crisis.”¹² The Alliance has also found that:

⁸ Ibid, 23-24.

⁹ Ibid, 36.

¹⁰ Ibid, 49-59.

¹¹ *National Alliance To End Homelessness*, 2000, <http://www.endhomelessness.org/> (accessed May 2006).

¹² Ibid.

1. About half of the individuals who experienced homelessness over the course of a year lived in family units.
2. About 38 percent of people who were homeless over the course of a year were children.
3. Most people in homeless families had personal problems to overcome.
4. Homeless families reported that their major needs were help in finding affordable housing and financial help to pay for housing. What they most often received, however, was clothing, transportation assistance, and help in getting public benefits. Only 20 percent of the families reported that they actually receive help in finding housing.¹³

For the 50 percent of the population that was single, the Alliance said that most of them entered and exited the system quickly. Those who did not live in a homeless assistance system lived in a combination of shelters, hospitals, streets, jails, and prisons. From research about the single homeless population, the Alliance found that:

1. Eighty percent of single adult shelter users entered the homeless system for an average of one month and did not return. Nine percent used the system five times a year and stayed an average of two months. The remaining eleven percent lived in the system for an average of 280 days a year, and utilized about half of the system's resources.
2. The main types of help homeless single adults felt they needed included: help with locating a job, help finding affordable housing, and help

¹³ Ibid.

getting assistance with food, transportation, and public benefits. Only seven percent reported actually finding help with housing.¹⁴

Ultimately, the research highlighted homelessness as a primarily urban problem, simply because homeless people were more numerous, more geographically concentrated, and more visible in those areas. However, many people experienced homelessness and housing distress in small towns and rural areas. There were fewer shelters in these areas; therefore people who experienced homelessness were more likely to live in a car, a camper, or with relatives in overcrowded or substandard housing. Studies done that compared urban and rural homeless populations showed that homeless people in rural areas were more likely to be white, female, married, currently working, homeless for the first time, and they were homeless for a shorter period of time.¹⁵ Other research indicated that families, single mothers, and children made up the largest group of people who were homeless in rural areas.¹⁶ Thus, homelessness affected everyone, not just few.

In addition to the problem of defining homelessness, determining the primary cause was also a challenge. When Jonathon Kozol addressed the primary causes of homelessness in *Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America*, he wrote that there were “precipitating factors” such as, “family breakdown, drugs, culture of poverty,

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *Rural Homelessness*, 2006, <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/> (accessed July 2006).

¹⁶ Ibid.

teen pregnancies, etc.” but that the real cause was “lack of housing.”¹⁷ He went on to say that because so much “low-income housing is lost each year to condominium conversion, abandonment, arson, and demolition,” and because rents were rising disproportionately for those of low income, many had to choose between housing and food.¹⁸

Rural homelessness, like urban homelessness, was the result of poverty and lack of affordable housing. In 2005, research showed the rate of poverty was 1.2 to 2.3 times higher in rural areas compared to urban. Research also revealed that one in five non-metropolitan counties were classified as high poverty counties (defined as having a poverty rate of 20 percent or higher), while only one in 20 metropolitan counties were defined as being in states of high poverty.¹⁹ Rural homelessness was indeed most pronounced in rural regions that were primarily agricultural, regions whose economies were based on declining extractive industries such as mining, timber, or fishing, and regions that had experienced economic growth. Examples of the problems caused by growth were areas where industrial plants attracted more workers than jobs available, and areas near urban centers that attracted new businesses and higher income residents, thereby increasing taxes and the cost of living for all.²⁰

A lack of decent affordable housing was the common denominator in both rural and urban homelessness. In terms of rural homelessness, 30 percent of non-metropolitan

¹⁷ Kozol, Jonathan, *Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America* (New York: Random House Publishing, 1988), 11.

¹⁸ Ibid, 11.

¹⁹ *Rural Homelessness*, 2006, <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/> (accessed July 2006).

²⁰ Ibid.

households, or 6.2 million households, had at least one major housing problem.²¹ Other factors that affected rural homelessness included the distance between low-cost housing and employment opportunities, the lack of transportation, the decline in homeownership, restrictive land-use regulations and housing codes, rising rent burdens, and insecure tenancy resulting from changes in the local real estate market. The displacement of trailer park residents was an example of this. Efforts to end rural homelessness were problematic because of isolation, lack of awareness, and lack of resources. The National Coalition to End Homelessness suggested that the way to end this problem was to broaden the definition of homelessness to include those in temporary and/or dilapidated facilities, to increase outreach to isolated areas, and to increase networking and awareness on a national level.²²

In addition, the destruction of skid-row was often cited as a major cause of homelessness. Christopher Jenks wrote,

Soon after homelessness emerged as a national problem in the early 1980s, a small, but influential group of housing advocates began arguing that changes in the housing market had played a major role in creating the problem. They told two stories. The first, tried to explain why single adults, who once lived in skid-row hotels, now lived in shelters and bus stations. The villains of this drama were the politicians and planners who let developers replace 'single room occupancy' (SRO) hotels and rooming houses with shopping malls, office buildings, and up-scale apartments. The term SRO typically describes older buildings divided into single rooms that do not meet a city's current standards for new construction. The second story, tried to explain why more families with children were showing up in shelters. This account emphasized the growing shortage of affordable housing for families."²³

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Jencks, 61.

Over the years many people have felt the primary cause of homelessness was laziness. In December of 1999, New York City Mayor, Rudy Giuliani, announced that he would require the homeless to work before they could receive shelter. He was reviving the historical tradition that had existed in the 19th and early 20th century when the homeless were forced to labor on treadmills, or to chop wood or break stone for two or three hours before receiving a meal and a bed for the night.²⁴

Dealing with Homeless

Historically, although there were those who looked on the homeless with contempt and thought them to be lazy, there were Christian organizations that tried to care for the homeless with compassion and wisdom. One of the first organized charities in America, the Charity Organization Society, attempted to replace the police station facilities with private shelters.²⁵ In the 1840s, they introduced a screening process that sought to separate the “worthy poor” from the growing hordes of urban beggars. The worthy poor were considered to be poor due to no fault of their own, but rather an unfortunate life experience, such as the death of a spouse or parent, or the loss of employment. The mid-19th century saw the establishment of The Western Soup Society of Philadelphia by several anonymous gentlemen during a “depression year”. “Even amidst critics who claimed they were feeding ‘unworthy, lazy people’ the society grew

²⁴ Kusmer, preface.

²⁵ Ibid, 11.

and was funded well enough to begin a school lunch program in the schools of Philadelphia.”²⁶

The history of Christian compassion and its role in creating remedies for the homeless was addressed by Jeremy Reynolds in his book *Homeless in America-The Solution*. Reynolds quoted Marvin Olasky, saying that:

Poverty fighters one hundred years ago were more compassionate in the literal sense of ‘suffering with’ than many of us are now. Individuals opened their home to deserted and abandoned women and children. They offered jobs to traveling men who had abandoned hope and most human contact. Most importantly, these poverty fighters made moral demands on those whom they helped. They didn’t allow those who received their kindness to just eat and run. They saw family, work, freedom, and faith as central to our being, not as life-style options.²⁷

Olasky concluded that these charity workers from a century ago were successful because of seven principles:

- Affiliation -that emphasized the restoration of broken ties to family and friends;
- Bonding - that forged long-term, one-on-one contact between a volunteer and a needy person;
- Categorization - that used work tests’ and backgrounds checks to distinguish between different types of applicants;
- Discernment - that taught that ‘no’ in the short run produced better long-term results;
- Employment - that required work from every able-bodied applicant;

²⁶ Ibid, 29-30.

²⁷ Reynolds, Jeremy, *Homeless in America: The Solution* (Lafayette, Louisiana: Huntington House, 1994), 51.

- Freedom - that helped the able needy to resist enslavement to the charity of governmental or private masters;
- God – who emphasized the spiritual as well as the material.²⁸

Reynalds' book related his experiences as he began a ministry to the homeless. His experiences resonated as he began:

When I commenced my ministry to the homeless, I had “ministry” on my mind - you know- spiritual stuff. I had no idea that that included formulating budgets, keeping neighbors happy, dealing with county fire, health, and zoning departments. But it does. It all goes with the territory. Oh and then there's dancing with the IRS, and establishing non-profit corporations, and receiving and maintaining federal tax exempt status!²⁹

The book matched the thesis of this project well because of the correlation of his chapters on zoning, meeting the press, and solicitations. It offered many insights, but most importantly said that the overall philosophy of ministry should be Christian and should always be reflected in its policies.

Another very practical, solution-oriented piece of literature was from the National Alliance to End Homelessness called “A Plan, Not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in Ten Years.”³⁰ This organization believed that homelessness could be eliminated in ten years, if the following plan was enacted. They recommended four steps that needed to be taken simultaneously.

²⁸ Ibid, 52-53.

²⁹ Ibid, introduction.

³⁰ *National Alliance To End Homelessness*, 2000, "A Plan, Not A Dream: How To End Homelessness In Ten Years," <http://www.endhomelessness.org/pub/tenyear/executive.htm>. (accessed March 2005).

1. Plan for outcomes - Most American communities plan how to manage homelessness, not how to end it. Most localities could help homeless people much more effectively if they changed the mix of assistance they provide. Collecting better data and implementing a planning process that focuses on the outcome of ending homelessness would do that.
2. Close the front door - The homeless assistance system ends homelessness for thousands of people everyday, but they are quickly replaced by others. This situation could be reversed by making sure the flow of incentives can favor helping people with the most complex problems. Prevention holds the promise of saving money on expensive systems of remedial care.
3. Open the back door - People should be helped to exit homelessness as quickly as possible through a housing first approach. For the chronically homeless this means a permanent supportive housing. We should avoid having people spend years in homeless systems, either in a shelter or transitional housing.
4. Build the infrastructure - The supply of affordable housing needs to be increased; income for the poor must be adequate for necessities such as food, shelter, and health care.

The North Carolina 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness (February 2005) was developed by the Interagency Council for Coordinating Homeless Programs (ICCHP). as an advisory group. It was created by executive order in 1992 to advise the Governor and the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services about issues affecting people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. In their research they

concluded that homelessness in North Carolina had continued to increase. The goals of the North Carolina 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness were to:

1. Increase state level commitment and leadership to ensure sustained political will for development and implementation of the North Carolina Plan to End Homelessness
2. Implement aggressive prevention strategies
3. Develop more Permanent Supported Housing
4. Encourage local communities across North Carolina to develop 10-year Plans to End Homelessness.

This plan also had a Five Year Action Plan that would set preliminary benchmarks for the North Carolina 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. The four benchmarks were:

1. Create 1250 supported housing tenancies for persons with disabilities who are experiencing long term homelessness.
2. Create 1250 tenancies to prevent homelessness for persons being discharged from publicly funded systems.
3. Create 1000 tenancies for homeless families and single persons without disabilities who are experiencing homelessness.
4. Create 300 new shelter beds in communities with no shelter facility, and renovate 300 shelter beds in communities with existing facilities.³¹

The total cost for these benchmarks was estimated to be \$ 307.5 million.

³¹ *National Alliance To End Homelessness*, 2000, "A Plan, Not A Dream: How To End Homelessness In Ten Years," <http://www.endhomelessness.org/pub/tenyear/executive.htm>. (accessed March 2005). 7-11.

In summary, the research in this area of literature (the problem of homelessness) revealed that a homeless ministry must be based on a study of the background and needs of the community, while keeping in mind all the different reasons for homelessness and remaining true to Christian principles.

Spiritual Formation

The next two areas of the literature review targeted the spiritual resources necessary to meet the needs of the homeless and the poor in communities. These were spiritual formation and leadership theory and practice.

Maxie Dunnam wrote in *Alive in Christ* that, “spiritual formation is the dynamic process of receiving through faith and appropriating through commitment, discipline, and action, the living Christ into our own life to the end that our life will conform to, and manifest the reality of Christ’s presence in the world.”³² The research in this area revealed five major findings which will be examined individually:

1. Spiritual Disciplines are a means of grace for spiritual transformation into the likeness of Jesus.
2. Practicing spiritual disciplines is a spiritual journey of adventures of faith
3. People are hungry for a relevant spirituality that addresses questions of being.
4. Unconfessed sin, prayerlessness, and ignorance of the practices are three major hindrances for spiritual growth.
5. The recovery of the small-group spiritual growth model will result in congregational renewal.

³² Dunnam, Maxie, *Alive in Christ* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), 26.

Dallas Willard in *The Spirit of the Disciplines* claimed that what the church needs today is a return to the practice of the spiritual disciplines that Jesus practiced. He wrote, “We can become like Christ by doing one thing - by following him in the over-all style of life he chose for himself.”³³ Jesus practiced the spiritual disciplines of solitude and silence, prayer, simplicity, study, and service. Willard described these disciplines as “nothing but the love of Jesus with the resolute will to be like him whom we love.”³⁴ Willard described the non-practice of these disciplines as, “the great omission from the Great Commission.”³⁵ Jesus gave his disciples this charge before he ascended into heaven,

All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28: 18-20)

Willard’s contention was that the anemic spirituality that the church has experienced was because her people have not been taught to observe all that has been commanded, from the Great Commission. He wrote “In the place of Christ’s plan, historical drift has substituted to make converts (to a particular faith and practice) and baptize them into the church membership. Failing to make converts into disciples makes it impossible to teach how to live as Christ lived and taught.”³⁶

³³ Willard, Dallas, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (New York: Harper Collins, 1988), ix.

³⁴ Ibid, vii.

³⁵ Ibid, 260.

³⁶ Ibid.

This spiritual transformation was intended to be liberating and to be the normal way of Christian life. Richard Foster in *The Celebration of Discipline* wrote,

We must not be led to believe that the disciplines are only for spiritual giants and hence beyond our reach, or only for contemplatives who devote all their time to prayer and meditation. Far from it. God intends the disciplines of the spiritual life to be for ordinary human beings, people who have jobs, who care for children, who wash dishes, and mow lawns.³⁷

According to the scriptures, all Christians faced the problem of ingrained habits of sin. The tendency was to think of sin as individual acts, but the Scripture said it was more than that. The Apostle Paul referred to it as a condition that plagued the human race. He wrote, “As it is written: there is no one righteous, not even one: there is no one who understands, no one who does good, not even one” (Romans 3: 10-12). When there was despair of gaining inner transformation through human powers of will and determination, there was always a gift of God to be graciously received. In Romans 5: 17, Paul made the statement, “For if, by the trespass of the one man death reigned through one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.” Yet, this did not mean that we had no part in cooperating with God in receiving this gift. Our role was to respond to God’s offer of righteousness with faith and repentance. Paul also wrote, “He who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption” but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Galatians 6: 8).

In his *Celebration of Discipline*, Foster explained that:

Paul’s analogy is instructive. A farmer is helpless to grow grain. He cultivated the ground. He plants the seed, he waters the plants, and then the natural forces of

³⁷ Foster, Richard J., *Celebration of Discipline, the Path to Spiritual Growth* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 1.

the earth take over, and up come the grain. This is the way it is with the Spiritual Disciplines – they are a way of sowing to the Spirit. The Disciplines are God’s way of getting us into the ground: they put us where he can work within us and transform us. By themselves the Spiritual Disciplines can do nothing; they can only get us to the place where something can be done. They are God’s means of grace.”³⁸

The purpose of these Disciplines, then, was spiritual growth. Foster described this spiritual growth by saying that, “The Spiritual Disciplines are inward and spiritually reality, and the inner attitude of the heart is far more crucial than the mechanics for coming into the reality of the spiritual life.”³⁹ Foster cited 12 spiritual disciplines and separated them into three categories. The Inward disciplines were the practice of meditation, prayer, fasting, and study. The Outward Disciplines were the practice of simplicity, solitude, submission, and service. The Corporate Disciplines were the practice of confession, worship, guidance, and celebration.⁴⁰

Reading Willard and Foster’s comprehensive works on the spiritual disciplines and the theme of spiritual transformation prompted further research. John Ortberg’s book, *The Life You’ve Always Wanted, Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People*. Ortberg continued the theme of spiritual transformation by using the example of the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, a popular children’s television show a few years ago. The show had a group of teenage super heroes who could morph when needed and became martial arts heroes for justice. Ortberg’s work established the goal of the spiritual life, which was

³⁸ Ibid, 7.

³⁹ Ibid, 3.

⁴⁰ Ibid, Table of Contents.

to allow Jesus to transform us into new creatures.⁴¹ Spiritual disciplines were never intended to be an end in themselves. Practicing the spiritual disciplines wisely meant prayerfully practicing a mix of disciplines. Ortberg wrote, “Spiritual transformation is not a matter of trying harder, but of training wisely.”⁴² He described this as a “well-ordered heart.” He quoted St. Augustine who said, “that to have a well-ordered heart is to love: the right thing, to the right degree, in the right way, and with the right kind of love.”⁴³

In reviewing spiritual formation literature, the theme “the spiritual journey” was prevalent. This journey leads to spiritual growth and a growing faith. By observing the concept of the spiritual journey, it could be seen how different methodologies would have resulted in spiritual transformation and an adventurous journey of faith.

In the *Upper Room* series, “Companions in Christ,” the authors explained that Jesus’ life gave us the supreme example of the spiritual life as a journey. Job wrote

I was six years old when my family took a trip of more than one day. We traveled from North Dakota to Wyoming- my parents, two brothers, and I along with clothes and food for many days - all packed into a 1929 Durant automobile. It was a long trip filled with uncertainties. The car was not always dependable. Poorly marked and inadequately maintained roads resulted in a rough and dusty ride. Moreover, we had never traveled this way before. But what a glorious trip it was! Every day was filled with new surprises and sometimes delights beyond

⁴¹ Ortberg, John, *The Life You've Always Wanted* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2002), 19-26.

⁴² Ibid, 43.

⁴³ Ibid, 198.

description. The entire journey informed and transformed us as we shared new perceptions, made discoveries, and learned from the experience together.⁴⁴

With his personal journey as an example, Job said that like us, Jesus, too, followed his own spiritual journey. He began his earthly sojourn as a helpless, vulnerable infant, completely dependant on the nurture of his parents and the providential grace of a God.⁴⁵ This spiritual journey, however, required a disciplined plan of spiritual growth.

An excellent spiritual growth plan was set forth in “Companions in Christ.” This 28-week small group experience in spiritual formation emphasized this personal journey. Job and Thompson explored five areas in which the journey proceeds, spending five to six weeks, on each area.

1. Embracing the Journey: The Way of Christ
2. Feeding on the Word: The Mind of Christ
3. Deepening our Prayer: The heart of Christ
4. Responding to Our Call: The Work of Christ
5. Exploring Spiritual Guidance: The Spirit of Christ

The spiritual journey must proceed for spiritual growth to take place, and sometimes the faith journey reveals not growth that is needed, but rather a realization that an unhealthy spirituality is taking place.

⁴⁴ Gerrit Dawson, Adele Gonzalez, E. Glenn Hinson, Reuben Job, Marjorie Thompson, Wendy Wright, *Companions in Christ - Participants Book - A Small Group Experience in Spiritual Formation*, ed. Janice T. Grana (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2002), 17.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 19.

Sue Monk Kidd also discussed the journey as she described her Baptist heritage in *When the Heart Waits*. She listed three main tendencies she learned to resist when relating to God.

1. All Lines Must Keep Moving - Theme parks have lines that have the appearance of movement, knowing that people today hate waiting. This hurry and impatience affects spirituality, as Christians resist learning to wait upon the Lord.
2. Make Life Happen - Christians want to make their spirituality grow on their own and they want it now. Farmers understand that the growth process can not be rushed, if the crops are to be fruitful. Spiritual growth cannot be hurried.
3. Eat Dessert First - Life is uncertain, so eat dessert first. Christians often times avoid pain and then suffer the consequences of taking the easy road.⁴⁶

Kidd's work combined the themes of transformation and the spiritual journey. Her quest into contemplative spirituality did not discount her Baptist spirituality of "doing," but, instead, opened her soul to answer questions of "being" and "becoming." This was reflected, ultimately, in her spiritual growth.

This literature review also indicated that many today, like Sue Monk Kidd, are yearning for a spirituality that would feed their souls and give meaning to their lives. Kenneth Boa's book *Conformed to His Image* gave a biblical and practical approach to spiritual formation, comparing the process as "observing a gem with many facets." He wrote,

At one point in my journey, I discovered the spiritual disciplines and immersed myself in them. At another point, I found myself captivated by writings that

⁴⁶ Kidd, Sue Monk, *When the Heart Waits, Spiritual Direction for Life's Sacred Queston* (San Francisco: Harper, 1990), 32-40.

centered on the exchanged life - Christ's life for our life. During yet another period, I focused on the spiritual life as a product of being filled and empowered by the Spirit. I also went through a time when spiritual warfare became particularly real for me. The same thing happened as each of the other facets of spirituality, and I began to see a pattern. As important as each of these approaches has been to me, no one of them is sufficient; there is always more.⁴⁷

Boa's facets of spirituality were:

- Facet 1- Relational Spirituality: Loving God Completely, Ourselves
Correctly, and Others Compassionately
- Facet 2 - Paradigm Spirituality: Cultivating an Eternal versus a Temporal
Perspective
- Facet 3 - Disciplined Spirituality: Engaging in the Historical Disciplines
- Facet 4 - Exchanged Life Spirituality: Grasping Our True Identity in
Christ
- Facet 5 - Motivated Spirituality: A Set of Biblical Incentives
- Facet 6 - Devotional Spirituality: Falling in Love with God
- Facet 7- Holistic Spirituality: Every Component of Life under the
Lordship of Christ
- Facet 8 - Process Spirituality: Process Versus Product, Being versus Doing
- Facet 9 - Spirit-filled Spirituality: Walking in the Power of the Spirit
- Facet 10 - Warfare Spirituality: The World, The Flesh, and the Devil
- Facet 11 - Nurturing Spirituality: A Lifestyle of Evangelism and
Discipleship

⁴⁷ Boa, Kenneth, *Conformed to His Image* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001), 16.

- Facet 12 - Corporate Spirituality: Encouragement, Accountability, and Worship

Boa recommended that practicing the different facets of spirituality would lead to greater spiritual growth.⁴⁸

A third discovery of this research was that people were hungry for a relevant spirituality that addressed questions of being. This theme of spiritual hunger was highlighted in the popularity of Bruce Wilkinson's trilogy of spiritual growth books, *Prayer of Jabez*, *Secrets of the Vine*, and *The Life that God Rewards*. These books addressed questions of being and meaning answered with the affirmation that God wants us to have a blessed life. This affirmation was in the prayer of Jabez from I Chronicles 4:10, "Oh that you would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory that your hand would be with me, and that you would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain."

Another series that piqued great interest was the *Left-Behind* series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. This series addressed the question, "What does the Bible say will happen to us in the future?" LaHaye and Jenkins tried to convey these Biblical prophecies in a fictional way that in order to help us imagine what life would be like as these prophecies played out.

Rick Warren's *Purpose Driven Life* was another literary work that answered the question of being. He asked the age-old question, "What on earth am I here for?" and then answered it by explaining that all people had five major purposes in their lives:

1. You Were Planned for God's Pleasure

⁴⁸ Ibid, 467-468.

2. You Were Formed for God's Family
3. You Were Created to Become Like Christ
4. You Were Shaped For Serving God
5. You Were Made For a Mission⁴⁹

Warren developed a program to help people discover their purpose by taking congregations through a 40-day spiritual journey that required fifteen to twenty minutes of devotional reading and journaling each day. In addition to daily devotions, the program also encouraged the congregation to create small groups to meet once a week and reflect upon the assigned purposes. The Purpose-Driven Video reported that the 3,000 congregations that have used this program have seen the following results: an average, 20 percent increase in worship attendance, a 20 percent increase in financial giving, and an 80 percent increase in small group participation.

Relevant spirituality in the 21st century must address questions of being, becoming, and doing in a language and methodology that connects well. People are hungry today to know God, His purpose for their lives, and to make a difference in this world. Yet, according to this research, this hunger can be hindered, and can fail to be satisfied.

A fourth discovery of this literature review was that unconfessed sin, prayerlessness, and ignorance of spiritual disciplines were three major hindrances for spiritual growth. Henry Blackaby in *Holiness* wrote that there were three much needed truths for God's people:

⁴⁹ Warren, Rick, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2002), 55-56.

1. The Loss of the Fear of God - Christians need to regain their fear of God, for it is when nations fear Him that they are spiritually blessed. Likewise it is when nations lose this fear that they stand in jeopardy of judgment.
2. Seeing Sin from God's Perspective - Christians need to come to understand that nothing burdens the heart of God more deeply than sin in the lives of His people. They need to confess their sin to Him and be cleansed.
3. The Highway of Holiness - Christians need to be holy and set apart, living their lives in such a way that God can use them as a "highway" over which He can come to a lost world.⁵⁰

Blackaby also wrote, "I am deeply convinced that praying for revival is an offense to God if we do not have a clean heart."⁵¹ The remedy to this is a confession of sin and repentance of sin. A renewed hunger for holiness will come after this cleansing.

Guides to confession and repentance were seen in Dr. Gregory Frizzell's books *Returning to Holiness* and *How to Develop a Powerful Prayer Life*. These works included a call to repentance, with very specific confession of sin, and a call to the expansion of one's prayer life. Sins of thought, attitude, speech, relationship, commission, and self-reliance all have hindered spiritual growth.⁵² It was suggested to that a plan be made that would bring about this growth. It would start with a goal of a two to three minute daily devotion and then progressively expand to 30-45 minutes daily.

⁵⁰ Blackaby, Henry, *Holiness, God's Plan for Fullness of Life* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 12.

⁵¹ Ibid, 78.

⁵² Frizzell, Dr. Gregory R., *Returning to Holiness, A Personal and Church Wide Journey to Revival* (Memphis: Master Design Ministries, 1999), 15-73.

Yet, failing to grow spiritually could not be attributed entirely to unconfessed sin and prayerlessness. Often, it has been a result of ignorance of the spiritual disciplines and a deficiency of its teaching in the church. Dallas Willard articulated this when he wrote, “For serious churchgoing Christians, the hindrance to true spiritual growth is not unwillingness. I finally decided the problem was a theological deficiency, a lack of teaching, understanding, and practical direction.”⁵³ And indeed, the ignorance of the spiritual disciplines among Christian leaders is not new.

E. Glenn Hinson chronicled this recurring theological deficiency in *Spiritual Preparation for Christian Leadership*. For the first three centuries of its existence, Christianity’s leaders received “on the job” spiritual guidance. In the age of martyrs, the catechumenate had to prepare converts to literally die for their faith. The catechumenate was a three year Christian education preparation to prepare converts for membership in the church. After the conversion of Constantine to Christianity, in 312 AD, the model of spiritual formation of clergy that soon dominated was monasticism. The “flight” from the world became an attractive option to avoid contamination from worldly affairs.⁵⁴

During the middle ages, the formation of clergy occurred in two contexts, monastic and Episcopal schools. Monastic schools aimed principally at spiritual formation. The Episcopal schools stressed academics. As universities originated, some outstanding monks became leading clergy. These included Anselm of Canterbury, Anslem of Leon, William of Champeax, and Peter Abelard. The universities gradually

⁵³ Willard, 18.

⁵⁴ Hinson, *Spiritual Preparation for Christian Leadership* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1999), 19-20.

exerted a pull away from contemplative piety towards a more rigorous academic training.⁵⁵

The Reformation period of church history that began in the 15th century brought a much needed return to the scriptures as the primary guide for faith, and brought a spirituality that values “the priesthood of all believers.” The church, though, still suffered from clergy leaders who were strong academically, but weak in their theology of spiritual formation.

In the 18th century, one man demonstrated that academic excellence and spiritual formation could be intertwined. His name was John Wesley. Wesley’s work led to the research of a particular means of grace that he used very effectively.

A study of his work led to the fifth discovery: The recovery of the small-group spiritual growth groups will result in congregational renewal. D. Michael Henderson’s study of John Wesley’s system for spiritual growth in *John Wesley’s Class Meeting* detailed how this renewal transpired. He wrote:

John Wesley created an instructional system which brought about a national spiritual renewal in eighteenth century England. His techniques for nurturing and training disciples not only brought about personal transformation to tens of thousands of individual working class believers, but a moral reformation as well.⁵⁶

Wesley’s unique method combined several interlocking group techniques to construct a ladder of personal spiritual improvement. The rungs on Wesley’s ladder of Christian

⁵⁵ Ibid, 21.

⁵⁶ Henderson, D. Michael, *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples* (Nappanee, Indiana: Francis Asbury Press of Evangel Publishing House, 1997), 11.

discipleship were small interactive groups: the class meeting, the band, the select band, the penitent band, and the society. The blending of accountability, support, and exhortation to disciplined Christianity proved to help ordinary people rise above alcoholism, poverty, and despair and look to Christian faith as their source of strength.⁵⁷

The heart of this revolutionary spiritual movement that was so effective with common people was the class meeting. This small group of six to eight people met weekly to give an account of their personal spiritual growth. The class meeting proved to be a vital means of spiritual growth and transformation. This plan for spiritual growth and discipleship resulted in a rapidly growing body of adherents. Howard Synder writes in *The Radical Wesley*,

After thirty years in 1768, Methodism had grown to 40 circuits and 27,341 members. Ten years later, the numbers had grown to 60 circuits and 40,089 members; in another decade, 99 circuits and 66,375 members. By 1798, seven years after Wesley's death, the totals jumped to 149 circuits with 101,712 members."⁵⁸

In the chapter, "Why Was Wesley's System So Effective?" Henderson noted the leadership principals that emerged from this spirituality.

1. Lay leadership
2. Appointed leadership, not elected
3. Leaders recognized and trained, but not born
4. Qualification by faithfulness
5. Practice in appealing to action

⁵⁷ Ibid, 12.

⁵⁸ Snyder, Howard, *The Radical Wesley* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Varsity Press, 1980), 54.

6. A combination of local and trans-local leadership⁵⁹

Wesley's small group ministry was combined with powerful, relevant preaching. In fact, his enthusiasm for religion was so powerful that many pulpits of England were closed to him. At the strong urging of George Whitfield, Wesley adopted "field preaching."⁶⁰ This outdoor street preaching was difficult for Wesley to embrace. In his journal he revealed his fears. He wrote:

Saturday 31-March - In the evening I reached Bristol, and met Mr. Whitfield there. I could scarcely reconcile myself at first to this strange new way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday; having been all my life (until very recently) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in the church.⁶¹

But Wesley embraced "field preaching" and, ultimately, the powerful combination of field preaching and class meetings proved to be the key to the Methodist revival.

This review of spiritual formation literature led to the conclusion that Christian leadership could be empowered today by relevant, biblically based preaching on spiritual formation, and the rediscovery of the teaching and practice of spiritual disciplines as found in a small group setting. This empowerment will lead to greater church growth and attendance.

⁵⁹ Henderson, 147.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 28.

⁶¹ Ibid, 27.

Leadership Theory and Practice

The third area of the literature review was leadership theory and practice. Peter Northouse's book *Leadership: Theory and Practice* was an excellent overview and summary of much of the leadership theories. Northouse defined leadership as a process. He wrote, "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Defining leadership as a process means that it is not a trait or characteristic that resides in the leader, but a transactional event that occurs between the leader and its followers."⁶² Northouse began by contrasting trait leadership (based on physical and personality traits) and process leadership. The trait view of leadership focused on the height, intelligence, extroversion, fluency, and other traits. Statements such as "He is born to be a leader," or "She is a natural leader," were commonly expressed by people who adhere to this leadership philosophy. Process leadership implies that a leader affects and is affected by his followers. The emphasis in this view of leadership was that leadership is not a linear, one-way event, but rather an interactive event. When leadership was defined in this manner, it was available to all, and was not something one had to be born with. Northouse's thesis was that leadership followed the learned process theories. Northouse provided a summary of different leadership theories that pertained, in particular, to leadership for beginning a homeless ministry. The theories included the trait approach, the skills approach, the situational approach, and the transformational approach.⁶³

⁶² Northouse, Peter G., *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2004), 3.

⁶³ Ibid, 11.

Trait Approach Leadership Theory

The trait approach had its roots in the leadership theory that suggested that certain people were born with special traits that made them great leaders. Leadership studies in the 20th century sought to identify those traits that separated leaders from non-leaders. Northouse summarized five major studies of trait leadership and labeled them as follows: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability.⁶⁴ According to this theory, larger than life leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, and Martin Luther King Jr. would have possessed these traits in abundance.

One of the first writers on trait leadership, Ralph Stogdill, had this interesting finding concerning intelligence in relation to trait leadership studies from 1903-1947. He wrote:

One of the most significant findings concerning the relation of intelligence to leadership is that extreme discrepancies between the intelligence of potential leaders and their followers militate against the exercise of leadership. Hollingsworth (50) found that 'among children with a mean IQ of 100, the IQ of the leader is likely to fall between 115 and 130 IQ. That is the leader, is likely to be more intelligent, but not too much more intelligent than the average group led'.⁶⁵

Stogdill also noted that a child with an IQ of 160 had very little chance of becoming a popular leader among children with average intelligence but may become a leader of children with a mean IQ of 130.

Northouse list four strengths of the trait leadership approach:

1. It was intuitively appealing because it fits clearly into the popular idea that leaders were special people who were out front, leading the way in society.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 19-20.

⁶⁵ Stogdill, Ralph, *Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership*, ed. Bernard M. Bass (New York: The Free Press, 1981), 51.

2. There was a great deal of research that validated the basis of this perspective.
3. By focusing exclusively on the leader, the trait approach provided an in-depth understanding of the leader component in the leadership process.
4. It provided some benchmarks against which individuals could evaluate their own personal leadership attributes.

Stogdill suggests that these leadership traits are not merely traits one possesses, but rather a working relationship among members of a group in which the leader gains status by demonstrating his capacity to finish projects successfully.⁶⁶

On the negative side, however, Northouse notes that the trait approach failed to delineate a definitive list of leadership traits. When the traits of leaders were analyzed, the approach failed to take into account the impact of the situation, and the theory was not well-grounded in strong, reliable research on these particular traits.

Warren Bennis in his book *Leaders*, cited one study that he conducted of ninety leaders. He did not find traditional traits such as charisma, dressing for success, or time management mentioned. What was mentioned by these leaders was their desire to be life-long learners. He wrote:

Leaders are perpetual learners. Some are voracious readers, Like Franklin Murphey, CEO of the Los Angeles Times, whose attention to books started early with a father he described as 'a great book lover and book collector'.⁶⁷

Bennis believes learning is an essential fuel for leadership with particular traits of secondary importance.

⁶⁶ Ibid, ed., 68.

⁶⁷ Warren Bennis, Burt Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 187-188.

The Skills Approach to Leadership

A second approach to leadership, the skills approach, was similarly a leader-centered perspective on leadership. With the skills approach, there was a shift away from personality characteristics to an emphasis on skills and abilities that could be learned and developed.⁶⁸ The impetus for researching the skills approach to leadership was a classic article published by Robert Katz in the Harvard Business Review in 1955, titled, “Skills of an Effective Administrator.” Katz’s approach was an attempt to transcend the trait approach by addressing leadership as a set of developable skills. Based on his field research in administration and first-hand observations of executives in the workplace, Katz suggested that effective leadership depends on three basic personal skills. These were technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills.⁶⁹ The theory suggests that different levels of management need a different mix of these skills. For example, in supervisory management the technical skills are needed more than conceptual skills. Conversely, in top management levels, technical skills will take a back seat to conceptual skills.

In the 1990s, a group of researchers with funding support from the United States Army and the Department of Defense set out to develop a comprehensive theory of leadership based on problem-solving skills in organizations.⁷⁰ Researchers M.D. Mumford, S.J. Zaccaro, and F.D Harding developed a skills model that studied individual

⁶⁸ Northouse, 35.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 36-38.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 39.

attributes, competencies, and leadership outcomes. The key competencies that emerged from this study were problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, and knowledge. The individual attributes that emerged were general cognitive ability, crystallized cognitive ability, motivation, and personality. According to this study, this combination of skills and attributes resulted in effective performance.

Michael Mumford in *Pathways to Outstanding Leadership*, did a comparative analysis of charismatic, ideological, and pragmatic leaders. This study of 120 historically notable leaders used a historiometric framework. The study demonstrated that there are different pathways to outstanding leadership. The skills approach or pragmatic leadership that Mumford cited was Ben Franklin. Franklin had great success in making new discoveries such as the founding of subscription libraries, the introduction of paper currency, and the development of the Albany Plan of Union. He wrote:

Franklin's success in leading these ventures depended on unusual sensitivity to significant social problems, exceptional skill at identifying the causes of these problems, and skill at marshalling the social and fiscal resources needed to leverage understanding to an effective problem solution.⁷¹

Northouse summarized lists the following strengths of the skills approach of leadership:

1. It was a leader-centered model that stresses the importance of developing particular leadership skills.
2. The skills approach was intuitively appealing because of its universal accessibility.

⁷¹ Michael D. Mumford, *Pathways to Outstanding Leadership* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006), 9-10.

3. The skills approach provided an expansive view of leadership that incorporates a wide variety of components.
4. The skills approach provided a structure that is very consistent with the curricula of most leadership programs.

Northouse took time to point out the shortcomings of this approach, as well. He felt the theory was weak because it actually extended beyond the boundaries of leadership by including motivation, critical thinking, and conflict resolution. It was also weak in predictive value and it incorporated some of the trait approach by looking at the attributes of the leaders.⁷²

The Situational Approach to Leadership

The situational approach to leadership was one of the most recognized approaches to leadership and was developed by P. Hersey and K. Blanchard in 1969. It was based on Reddin's 3-D management style theory. As the name implied, situational leadership focused on leadership in situations. The basic premise of this theory was that different situations called for different kinds of leadership. Situational leadership stressed that leadership was composed of both a directive and a supportive dimension, with each having to be applied appropriately in a given situation.⁷³ Ken Blanchard, Patricia Zigarmi, and Drea Zigarmi in *Leadership and the One-Minute Manager* wrote, "So as a situational leader, not only should you use different strokes for different folks, but in

⁷² Northouse, 52.

⁷³ Ibid, 109.

many cases you need to use different strokes for the same folks, depending upon the task.”⁷⁴

The dynamics of situational leadership were best understood by separating the model into two parts. The first part of the leadership style referred to the behavior pattern of an individual who attempts to influence others. This included directive (task) behaviors and supportive (relationship) behaviors. These leadership styles were classified by four distinct categories, including high directive-low supportive style, high directive-high supportive style, high supportive-low directive style, low supportive-low directive style.

High directive-low supportive style was also known as a directing style. In this approach, the leader focused communication on goal achievement and less time on supportive behavior. The high directive-high supportive style was known as the coaching style. In this approach, the leader focused communication on both goal achievement and maintenance of subordinate's needs. The high supportive-low directive style was a supporting style that focused on listening, praising, asking for input, and giving feedback. The low supportive-low directive was a delegating style offering less task input and less support.⁷⁵

Ralph Stogdill examined situational leadership and the relation to stress. He cited a study done by Fiedler, Potter, Zais, and Knowlton (1979) that reviewed the results of four studies of military organizations. Among the 158 infantry squad leaders who

⁷⁴ Kenneth Blanchard, Patricia Zigarmi, Drea Zigarmi, *Leadership and the One Minute Manager* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1985), 61.

⁷⁵ Northouse, 89-90.

experienced a high degree of stress in their relations with their immediate superiors, their experience correlated with their rated performance as a squad leader.⁷⁶

The situational approach was constructed around the idea that employees moved forward and backward along the developmental continuum, a continuum that represented the relative competence and commitment of subordinates. Northouse pointed out several strengths of this approach to leadership.

1. It had stood the test in the marketplace,
2. It was practical.
3. It was prescriptive.
4. It emphasized leader flexibility.
5. It reminded leaders to treat each subordinate differently based on the task at hand and to seek opportunities to help subordinates learn new skills and become more confident in their work.

Northouse listed several weaknesses of this approach as well. Research studies to justify the assumptions of this theory have been few, and they overlook demographic characteristics. Ambiguity existed with how the approach conceptualized certain aspects of the leadership process.⁷⁷

The Transformational Approach to Leadership

Transformational leadership was an approach to leadership that has grown in popularity. Transformational leadership was a process that changed and transformed

⁷⁶ Stogdill, 458.

⁷⁷ Northouse, 93-96.

individuals. It involved an exceptional form of influence that moved followers to accomplish more than was usually expected of them. It was a process that often incorporated charismatic and visionary leadership. The word transformational leadership was first coined by J.V. Downton in 1973. However, its emergence as an important approach to leadership began with a classic work by James McGregor Burns titled *Leadership*.⁷⁸

Burns distinguished between two types of leaders, the transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership referred to the leadership models that focused on the exchanges that occurred between leaders and their followers. In contrast, transformational leadership referred to the process whereby an individual engaged with others and created a connection that raised the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower.⁷⁹ Burns wrote:

This theory (transactional leadership) as it applies to the role of public opinion in that relationship, conceives of a leader and follower exchanging gratifications in a political marketplace. They are bargainers seeking to maximize their political and psychic profits.⁸⁰

In contrast, transformational leadership referred to the process whereby an individual engaged with others and created a connection that raised the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower.⁸¹ Burns described

⁷⁸ Ibid, 169-170.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 170.

⁸⁰ James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 258.

⁸¹ Northouse, 170.

transformational leadership as intellectual leadership, reform leadership and heroic leadership. He described transformational leadership as:

The transforming leader recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower. But, beyond that, the transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower.⁸²

Another study completed by R.J. House in 1976 resulted in the publication of a theory on one part of transformational leadership known as charismatic leadership. In this theory, House suggested that charismatic leaders acted in unique ways that had specific charismatic effects on their followers. First, they were strong role models. Second, charismatic leaders appeared competent to followers. Third, they articulated ideological goals that had moral overtones. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech was an example of this type of leadership.

Alan Bryman writing in *Charisma and Leadership in Organizations* cited five findings of several studies on charisma's role in leadership of organizations.

1. Vision was central to all the writers. Visionary leadership and charisma were linked between the leader and the organization.
2. Communicating the vision was important. The vision must be communicated in a way that could be clearly understood and grasped by the people.

⁸² Burns, 4.

3. The organization had to be empowered. Charismatic leadership energized organizations through a compelling vision.
4. The leader created a culture consistent with the vision. This was called the organizational culture.
5. The capacity of leaders to develop trust for the vision was crucial. Without that trust the vision would fail.⁸³

Another study by B.M. Bass in 1985 provided an expanded version of transformational leadership building on Burns and House's work. He extended Burn's work by giving more attention to followers rather than leaders' needs, and by giving more attention to the emotional elements and origin of charisma. Bass argues that transformational leadership motivates followers to do more than the expected by doing the following: raising the follower's level of consciousness about the importance and value of specified and idealized goals, getting followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the team or organization, and moving followers to address higher-level needs.⁸⁴

Two other transformational leadership studies have been significant. The first was by W.G. Bennis and B. Nanus in 1985. They asked 90 leaders basic questions such as, "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" The study resulted in the following findings:

1. Transforming leaders had a clear vision of the future state of their organizations.

⁸³ Alan Bryman, *Charisma & Leadership in Organizations* (London: Sage Publications, 1992), 146-147.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 173-174.

2. Transforming leaders were social architects for their organization.
3. Transforming leaders created trust in their organization by making positions clearly known and then standing by them.
4. Transforming leaders used creative deployment of self through positive self-regard.⁸⁵

Bennis and Nanus wrote in *Leaders: The Strategy for Taking Charge*:

Only a few will lead nations, but more will lead companies. Many more will lead departments or small groups. Those who aren't department heads will be supervisors. Those who follow on the assembly line may lead at the union hall. Like other complex skills, some people start out with more fully formed abilities than others, but what we determined is that the four managements can be learned, developed, and improved upon.⁸⁶

Another major study in this approach to leadership was done by N.M. Tichy and M.A.DeVanna (1986, 1990). This team studied the transformational leadership of twelve CEO's at mostly large corporations. They were particularly concerned with how leaders carried out the change process. Their research resulted in what they described as a three-act process consisting of:

1. Recognizing the need for change
2. Creating a Vision
3. Institutionalizing changes

Act One of this transformation process involved recognizing the need for change. There was a tendency for organizations to become comfortable with the way things are. Transformational leaders were change agents that could clearly see the need for change.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 180-181.

⁸⁶ Bennis and Nanus, 27.

Act Two in this change process required the creation of a vision. The vision would act as a road map for where the organization was headed. Act Three involved institutionalizing changes. This would require leaders that could change structures and establish new ones.⁸⁷

Bernard Bass in *Transformational Leadership* (1998) did extensive study of the United States Army to develop a theory for effective leadership for the 21st century army. Some of the questions that shaped this study were as follows:

1. What were the mechanisms that lead to greater commitment, involvement, loyalty, and performance?
2. Why was stress among followers greater under transactional leadership?
3. How did rank and status affect the tendency and need to be more transformational?⁸⁸

Ultimately, transformational leadership was one of the newest and most encompassing approaches to leadership that was concerned with the process of how certain leaders were able to inspire followers to do great things. Northouse's work was an excellent overall summary of leadership theory and practice in the 20th century and informed the reader that there were a variety of leadership models to glean from in beginning a homeless ministry in a small, southern town.

Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner's *Leadership Challenge* was an outstanding resource in discerning the leadership needed for a homeless ministry. *The Leadership*

⁸⁷ Northouse, 181-183.

⁸⁸ Bernard M. Bass, *Transformational Leadership* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associated, 1998), 4.

Challenge described how leaders mobilized others to desire to get extraordinary things done in organizations. Kouzes and Posner wrote, “It’s about the practices leaders use to transform values into actions, visions into realities, obstacles into innovations, separateness into solidarity, and risks into rewards. It’s about leadership that creates the climate in which people turn challenging opportunities into remarkable successes.”⁸⁹

Their research looked at the following questions:

1. What values should guide my actions as a leader?
2. How do I best set an example for others?
3. How do I articulate a vision for the future when things are so predictable?
4. How do I improve my ability to inspire others toward a common purpose?
5. How do I create an environment that promotes innovation, and risk?
6. How do I build a cohesive and spiritual team?
7. How do I share power and information and still maintain accountability?
8. How do I put more joy and celebration into our efforts?
9. What is the source of self-confidence required to lead?
10. How do I go about improving my leadership abilities?⁹⁰

Through their research, they developed a model of leadership referred to as the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. These five practices were:

1. Model the Way – To effectively model the behavior they expect of others, leaders had to be clear about their guiding principals. Exemplary leaders went

⁸⁹ Kouzes, James M. and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 12.

⁹⁰ Ibid, preface 23-24.

first. They went first by setting the example through their daily actions and demonstrating that they were deeply committed to their beliefs.

2. Inspire a Shared Vision – Leaders inspired a shared vision. To enlist people in a vision, leaders had to know their people and speak their language. People had to believe that leaders understood their needs and had their interests at heart. This leadership was a dialogue not a monologue. To enlist support, leaders had to intimate knowledge of people’s dreams, hopes, aspirations, visions, and values.

3. Challenge the Process - Leaders ventured out. Kouzes and Posner wrote,

Every single personal–best leadership case we collected involved some kind of challenge. The challenge might have been an innovative new product, a cutting-edge service, a groundbreaking piece of legislation, an invigorating campaign to get adolescents to join the environmental program, a revolutionary turnaround of a bureaucratic military program, or the start of a new plant or business.”⁹¹

Leaders knew well that innovation and change involved experimentation, risk, and failure. They were willing to proceed cognizant of this.

4. Enable Others to Act - Leadership was recognized as a team effort. In an interview with one executive it was noted that he used the word “we” three times as much as “I.”⁹² Leaders made it possible for others to do good work. It was noted that constituents did not perform well or stick around very long if their leader made them feel weak, dependent, or alienated. When a leader

⁹¹ Ibid, 17.

⁹² Ibid, 18.

made people feel strong and capable, as if they could do more than they ever thought possible, they gave their all and exceeded their own expectations.⁹³

5. Encourage the Heart- Leaders encouraged the heart of their people to carry on. Rudy Giuliani as mayor of New York City literally wore different hats to acknowledge different groups of rescue workers as he toured ground zero after the World Trade Center towers were destroyed on September 11, 2001.⁹⁴ It was a crucial part of the leader's job to show appreciation for other people's contribution and create a culture of celebration.

Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline* was helpful in this literature review in reminding leaders of the need to be a learning organization. Senge described the Fifth Discipline as the art and practice of being a learning organization. When organizations worked together as teams and practiced the five learning disciplines of systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning, then they were far more effective.⁹⁵ Using the example of the December 1903 flight by Wilbur and Orville Wright, Senge demonstrated the process of the fifth discipline. That flight in 1903 resulted in the invention of the airplane, but it would take more than thirty years before commercial aviation could serve the general public. Essentially, engineers say that a new idea has been "invented" when it is proven to work in the laboratory. It was the McDonnell Douglas DC-3, introduced in 1935, that ushered in the era of commercial air travel. During the next 30 years, the Boeing 247 was introduced to greatly improve air

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Senge, Peter M., *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 6-7.

travel. Senge identified five new component technologies that needed to gradually converge in order to inspire learning organizations.⁹⁶ These five components were:

1. Systems Thinking - Business and other human endeavors were systems. They were bound by invisible fabrics of interrelated actions which often took years to fully play out their effects on each other.
2. Personal Mastery - This was the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening personal vision, of focusing energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively.
3. Mental Models - These were deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influenced how the world was understood and how action could be taken. The Shell Oil Company was an example of a company that showed the value of accelerating learning. In the 1970s, Shell was the weakest of the big seven oil companies. By the late 1980s, it was the strongest. Shell's extraordinary success in managing the dramatic changes in the oil business world came in large measure to their commitment to continuous adaptation to the changing business environment. The discipline of working with mental models starts with turning the mirror inward, learning to unearth our internal pictures of the world.⁹⁷
4. Building a Shared Vision - When there was a genuine vision as contrasted with the all too familiar vision statement; people excelled and learned, not because they were told to, but because they wanted to.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 5-11.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 8-9.

5. Team Learning - This discipline started with dialogue. Hopefully in this dialogue, members of the team suspended assumptions and entered into a genuine “thinking together.” Team learning was vital because Senge asserted that “teams, not individuals, are the fundamental learning unit in modern organizations.”⁹⁸ In fact, the “learning organization” was an organization that was continually expanding its capacity to create its future.

Senge’s work was helpful in assessing the homeless ministry need, learning from other’s work, helping to realize that it took time to develop successful strategies and plans, and that the need to see the different phases as a “concert” with the different instruments working together for a common goal was important.

Also helpful to this project is Jim Collins’ *Good to Great*. Collins’ in-depth study of the question, “Can a good company become a great company and if so, how?” resulted in a five year research project studying Fortune 500 companies, looking for the common factors of good companies that made the transition to greatness. The discoveries of key concepts for greatness were:

1. Level 5 Leadership - Self-effacing, quiet, reserved, and even shy, these leaders were a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will. They were not high profile leaders with big personalities.
2. First Who....Then What - These leaders did not begin with vision and strategy. They began by making sure they had the right people on the bus. They also made sure they were in the right seats and they gave attention to

⁹⁸ Ibid, 10.

getting people off the bus that needed to get off. Having the right people was the most important asset.

3. Confront the Brutal Facts (Yet Never Lose Faith)- The Good - Great companies embraced what was called the Stockdale Paradox: The group must maintain unwavering faith that the company could and would prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties.
4. The Hedgehog Concept (Simplicity in Three Circles) – This concept was that if the company could not be the best in the world at its core business, then its core business absolutely could not form the basis of a great company. There had to be a simple concept at the core of the company that drove the focus of energy.
5. Technology Accelerators - They carefully selected technologies that would best benefit their mission.
6. The Flywheel and the Doom Loop - The good to great transformations never happened in one fell swoop. It was a process that resembled someone relentlessly pushing a giant heavy flywheel in one direction; turn upon turn, building momentum until there was a breakthrough, and beyond.⁹⁹

Collins' research was helpful in assessing how ministries could be successful in looking for humble leaders that could wisely select the qualified leadership team. They needed to do their homework and have an honest appraisal of the challenge ahead of them; then seek to clearly focus on the simple calling God has given them. They also needed to make wise use of technology as a means of assistance.

⁹⁹ Collins, Jim, *Good to Great* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 12-14.

One other valuable leadership study that was helpful in this section of the literature review was work done by Robert Greenleaf in *Servant Leadership*. Greenleaf's work seemed, at first, to be a somewhat paradoxical approach to leadership. At first glance, most people did not think that the two terms, servant and leader, matched very well. However, servant leadership emphasized that those leaders should be attentive to the concerns of their followers and empathize with them. They should take care of them and nurture them. Greenleaf's work was inspired by the novel, *The Journey to the East* by Herman Hesse. The story is about a group of travelers on a mythical journey who were accompanied by a servant who does menial chores for the travelers, but he also sustained them with his spirits and songs. The servant's presence had a great, positive impact on the group. Then, for some reason, the servant disappeared, and the groups of travelers fell into disarray. Without the servant, they could not carry on. Eventually, the servant reemerged as a leader caring for the travelers.¹⁰⁰

Greenleaf's work was geared toward developing servant leadership in business, in education, in foundations, and in churches. It was easily linked to Jesus' call to servanthood as found in the 13th chapter of the gospel of John. The servant as leader cared for the people he served and saw his responsibility as a sacred trust.

This literature review of spiritual formation, homelessness, leadership theory and practice has been insightful in exploring the qualities necessary for leadership to begin a homeless ministry in a small, rural town.

¹⁰⁰ Greenleaf, Robert, *Servant Leadership* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 7-8.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The problem of homelessness is a significant concern in many communities in this country. It can be especially perplexing when the faith communities in these small, rural towns wish to respond in Christian love. Searching for a solution to this problem became the springboard from which this project was begun. To begin this search, the history of homelessness in America was explored as well as the history of local homeless ministries that were operating at the time. The exploration of the history of homeless ministries led to the construction of a thesis. The thesis centered on the idea that a study of seasoned, effective leaders involved with homeless ministries would serve as a model for leadership selection in addressing this problem of homelessness. A study of these leaders' spirituality was completed by looking through the lens of the practice of the spiritual disciplines. This study examined the connection between spirituality and effective leadership. The exploration was implemented with the utilization of a spiritual leadership survey, interviews with the executive directors, and observations made from involvement with two local homeless ministries.

The spiritual leadership study involved fourteen homeless ministries that comprised their staffs, boards and volunteers. The study was conducted from June-August 2006. The homeless ministries were selected based on the following criteria:

1. The organization had been operational for at least five years.
2. The organization had achieved a 501-c3 non-profit status.

3. The organization was located in the American south.
4. The organization housed the homeless overnight.
5. The organization was willing to participate in the study.

The purpose for using the survey was to gather general information on homeless ministry leaders. Capturing both quantitative and qualitative data, the survey provided an overview of characteristics of the spiritual leadership of homeless shelters.

The interviews were helpful in obtaining more specific information and data. Interviews were done with executive directors of these fourteen organizations. The interviews were essential in discovering details of the type of spiritual leader that would be needed in order to be effective in ministry with the homeless. The interviews were used to obtain first-hand experiences and accounts of people who had previously dealt with homeless shelters and ministries. This element was crucial. The interviews provided the necessary guidance in discerning the right direction to go in ministry in one's community. The participants were offered the opportunity to see if certain assumptions about spiritual leadership were true. The first-hand accounts from the interviews also helped individualize the problem, thus making the information more relative to the reader.

Observations from personal experience and involvement with two local homeless ministries were also used in the investigation as a device to present even more specific and detailed information. The observations were gleaned from the work of the Caldwell Homeless Shelter (July 2004–November 2005) and the First United Methodist Church of Lenoir, North Carolina's Room in the Inn ministry, (January–December 2006). The observations provided contextual awareness of the conditions under which the leadership

practiced and the leadership needed to be effective in this ministry. Methodologies that worked and did not work were more easily observed in this setting. The overall research method chosen was qualitative. The surveys and the interviews were primarily qualitative research tools since they were exploring people's views and experiences (not easily measured). This approach was used in response to the consistent research that indicated the difficulty of addressing the problem of homelessness in communities. M.Q. Patton described qualitative research as:

...an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself. So that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of the setting, what their lives are like, what's going on for them, what its meanings are, what the world looks like in a particular setting - and in the analysis to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting. The analysis strives for depth of understanding.¹

Exploring the spiritual leadership of homeless leaders using qualitative methodologies of research proved to be an effective overall research strategy. Gathering information from the surveys and the interviews enabled the research to begin with a broad overview and gathering of data, and then a narrowing of the focus as the research proceeded. The research strategy was simply to explore with two methodologies the spiritual leadership of effective homeless ministry leaders. The hope, ultimately, was that the investigation would be a stepping stone in finding the leadership necessary to begin an effective homeless ministry in a small, southern town.

The spiritual leadership survey was developed with the assistance of Dr. William Murray. It was designed to be a research tool that would mine data in a broad fashion.

¹ Merriam, Sharan, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 1998), 6.

The spiritual life survey of homeless shelter leaders used both structured or closed questions and unstructured or open-ended questions.² The first step in the survey process was to collect data on how the spiritual disciplines connected with involvement in homeless ministry. A cover letter, along with 12 surveys, was mailed to each organization explaining the project and inviting participation.

The first question was: “What spiritual disciplines do you draw upon most frequently for spiritual strength?” This question was designed to explore how familiar the respondents were with spiritual disciplines. Respondents were asked to check any of the twelve spiritual disciplines that they practiced. A follow-up question was asked in order to probe deeper: “Please elaborate on the three disciplines that give you the most strength.” The question revealed the disciplines most important to leaders for their source of strength.

The second question was: “Which biblical models influence your practice of leadership with the homeless?” This question was designed to discover the biblical theology that provided the foundation for their leadership. The follow-up question; “Please explain why you chose this model,” was again designed to dig deeper into the subject and give the respondent opportunity to go into more detail. This question provided greater clarity to viewing the faith commitment behind the participation in this ministry.

² Forcese, Dennis P. and Stephen Richer et al., *Social Research Methods* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973), 160.

The third question asked was: “How does your spirituality and its practice help you to meet the challenges of working with the homeless?” This question was designed to assist respondents in reflecting on how their spirituality affected their ministry.

The final question was: “Has your relationship with God developed and changed as a result of working with the homeless?” This question was designed to help respondents to realize the transforming effect that spiritual leadership with the homeless can have on their lives as well as those they serve.

The interviews with the fourteen directors were pivotal in discovering more specifically the kind of spiritual leader needed to make a homeless ministry successful. Three interviews were completed in person and eleven were conducted by phone due to the distance of some of the locations. Rather than using a tape recorder, handwritten notes were taken during the interview. These notes were typed as soon as possible after the interview. There was a significant difficulty in reaching the very busy directors for interviews. It often required several phone calls, e-mails, and great persistence to reach them. Once an interview was granted, most were gracious and pleased to have the opportunity to talk about their ministries and leadership. Some attempts were made to do interviews by e-mail, but they were unsuccessful.

The two questions that were asked of all the directors were: “What are the most significant problems you face in your ministry with the homeless”, and “How does your faith help you to meet the challenges you face?” These two questions worked well in providing some structure and direction for conversation, but also allowed the flexibility for directors to share information that they believed to be significant. Dennis Forces and Stephen Richer describe the significance of this research tool, “The interviews take the

data collection a step further than surveys, since the researcher records instead of the respondent. This implies a dialogue situation – a give and take between researcher and respondent – a feature not possible in a self-administered questionnaire.”³

Interviews that were done in person were superior to phone interviews. Being able to speak face to face with people in their ministry settings made obtaining the data much easier. The drawback, however, was the numerous amounts of interruptions from volunteers and staff. It was imperative to conduct these interviews at the director’s convenience. This required prearranging a time when the director could take sufficient time to meet with me or receive my phone call.

The results of the study were analyzed by careful reading and re-reading of the surveys, typing and reflecting on the interviews. The goal was to look for the specific type of spirituality that was practiced, and the leadership skills that seemed to be most prevalent in the leaders. Here, spirituality referred to the specific spiritual disciplines that were cited as most important and practiced. Leadership referred to the specific type of leadership theory practiced by the leaders. The data was interpreted primarily through the lens of servant leadership. The literature review consistently pointed to the spiritual discipline of service being practiced in ministry with the poor. The leadership theory that best matched the effective leaders of homeless ministries was servant leadership. Three areas of the literature review were vital to the development of the research methodology: These areas included the problem of homelessness, spiritual formation, and leadership theory and practice. These areas of focus contributed to the design of the surveys and the

³ Forcese, Dennis P. and Stephen Richer et al., *Social Research Methods* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973), 174-175.

questions asked in the interviews. The qualitative emphasis was used to gain greater insight into the spiritual leadership of effective homeless ministry leaders and to use the findings as a guide for leadership selection in beginning a homeless ministry in a small, southern town. The analysis used was a thematic analysis which looked for the categories and themes of data that emerged from the research. Contrast and comparison analysis was used with the directors of the homeless ministries, especially in regard to gender differences in spirituality.

One main problem was encountered as a result of using this method. In gathering the data, the assumption was made that people would be eager and enthusiastic to participate in the research. This was not the case. After a poor response to the letters and surveys sent out in June 2006, all of the possible respondents received several phone calls inviting their participation. Persistence and patience was needed for this method to be effective.

This method of research was a very practical approach which could certainly be duplicated in other communities. A similar approach could help in developing an after-school program, a building program, beginning a new worship service or launching a variety of new missions in a community. The combination of surveys and interviews formed an effective set of tools to uncover the pertinent data needed.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES

Of the 30 organizations that were contacted, there were fourteen of these that responded in enough detail to be included in this project. The organization had to have returned some of the surveys and permitted an interview with their executive director. This chapter reveals the data findings of the project in two parts: the surveys and the interviews.

Survey Data

There were 50 respondents to the spiritual life survey. They consisted of executive directors (fourteen), board members, staff, and volunteers (36). There were 37 men and thirteen women who responded. From the fourteen ministry organizations, the 50 Spiritual Life Surveys were returned with the results that follow.

The Priority of Prayer

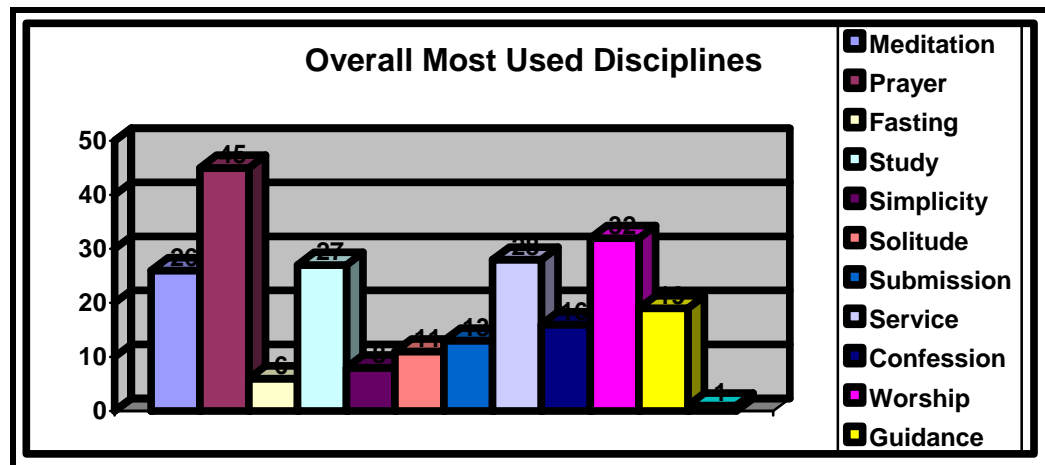
The first stream of data that became evident was that the respondents practiced the spiritual discipline of prayer most frequently. The first question in the spiritual life survey revealed this priority.

- **What spiritual disciplines do you draw upon most frequently for spiritual strength?**

a. Overall Spirituality

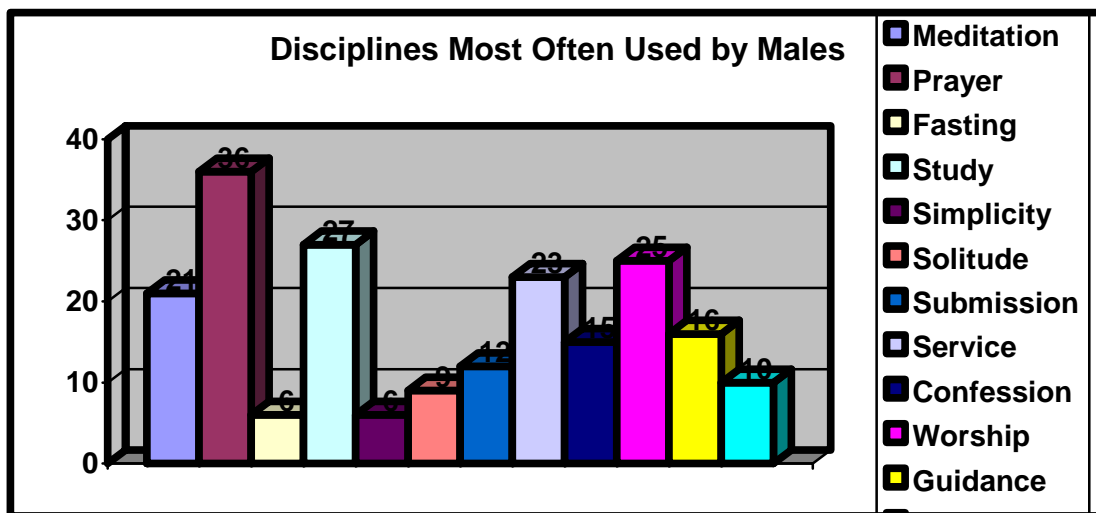
The highest discipline practiced was prayer (45), and the next four that followed were worship (32), service (28), meditation (26), and study (26).

Meditation	26	Submission	13
Prayer	45	Service	28
Fasting	6	Confession	16
Study	27	Worship	32
Simplicity	8	Guidance	19
Solitude	11	Celebration	1



There were similarities in men's and women's spirituality as well as some differences.

b. Men's Most Frequently Practiced Spiritual Disciplines:



Meditation 21

Submission 12

Prayer 36

Service 23

Fasting 6

Confession 15

Study 27

Worship 25

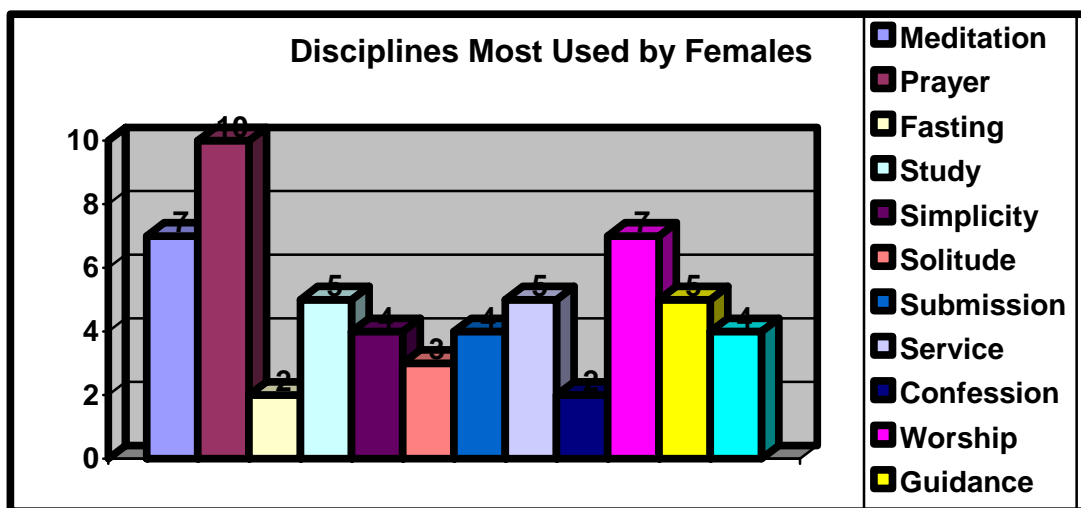
Simplicity 6

Guidance 16

Solitude 9

Celebration 10

c. Women's Most Frequently Practiced Disciplines

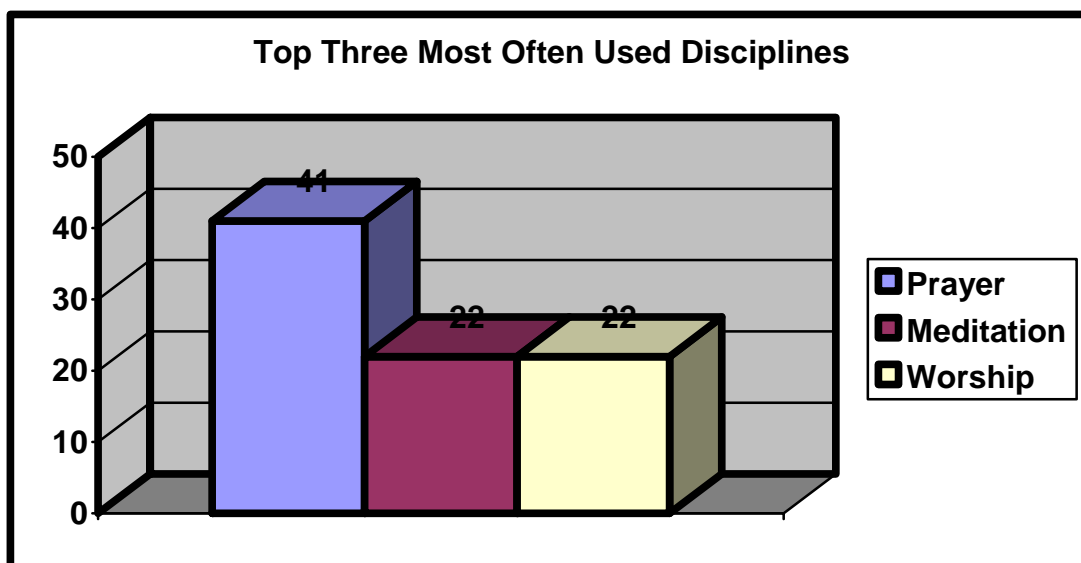


Meditation	7	Submission	4
Prayer	10	Service	5
Fasting	2	Confession	2
Study	5	Worship	7
Simplicity	4	Guidance	5
Solitude	3	Celebration	4

The follow question's findings continued to emphasize the priority of prayer.

- Please elaborate on the three disciplines that give you the most strength

d. *Top Three Disciplines Most Often Used:*



Prayer 41

Meditation 22

Worship 22

When asked for the top three disciplines the priority of prayer diminished somewhat from 92% to 82%, with meditation and worship diminishing as well to 44%.

*The following disciplines were listed as the top three for others:

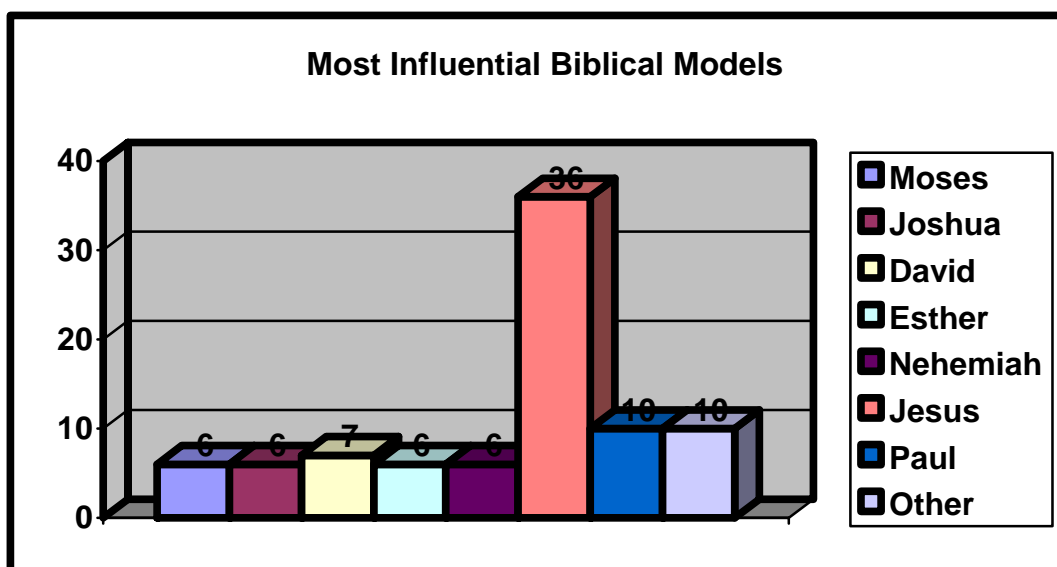
Service	12	Confession	5	Fasting	1
Study	8	Celebration	5	Guidance	6
Submission	6	Solitude	4	Simplicity	2

The priority of prayer as the most frequently practiced spiritual discipline of homeless ministry leaders was a consistent finding as a result of the first question.

Jesus as the Primary Biblical Model of Leadership

When asked the second question in regard to biblical leadership models the most frequent response was Jesus.

- The question, “Which Biblical models influence your practice of leadership with the homeless,” had the following responses:

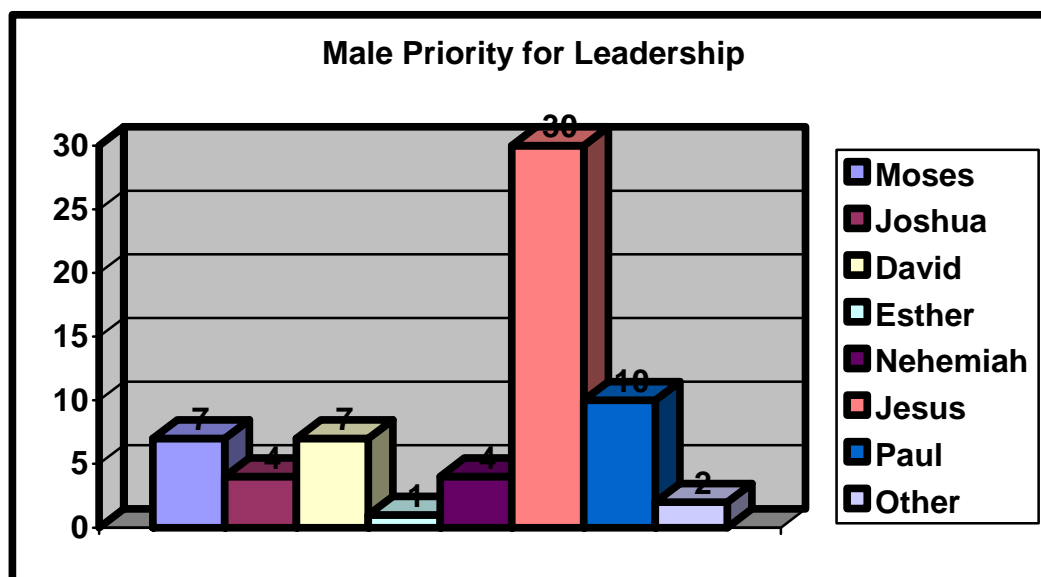


Moses	6	Nehemiah	6
Joshua	6	Jesus	36
David	7	Paul	10
Esther	6	Other	10

The category “Other” choices each received one vote. They were: Mary Magdalene, Ruth, Martha, Jeremiah, Job, Joseph, Peter Golden Rule, Matthew 25: 34-40, and St. Francis.

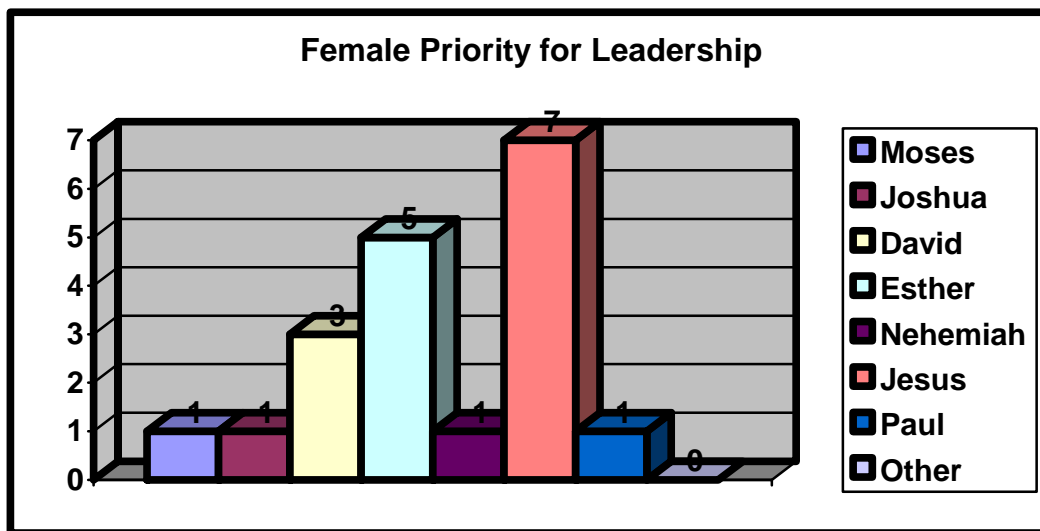
Men and women respondents all had Jesus as the primary biblical model of leadership but their secondary choices differed.

e. Men's Priority for Leadership:



Moses	7	Nehemiah	4
Joshua	4	Jesus	30
David	7	Paul	10
Esther	1	Other	2

f. Women's Priority for Leadership:



Moses	1	Nehemiah	1
Joshua	1	Jesus	7
David	3	Paul	1
Esther	5		

- **Please explain why you chose which model.**

A response that typically represented the selection of Jesus as their primary biblical model of leadership was, “Jesus is the ultimate model of applying balance of compassion and truth. Paul’s practical truths about the Christian walk are also applicable. David’s Psalms are also helpful and real in regard to struggles of life and God’s deliverance.”

Compassion as a Means of Meeting the Challenges of Working with the Homeless

The next question's findings revealed how vital the nature of compassion is as a source of strength to these ministry leaders. The question that was asked was:

- **How does your spirituality and its practice help you to meet the challenges of working with the homeless? (For example - cultivating patience, deepening, compassion, and strengthening courage). What is the cumulative effect of practicing the disciplines on your life and ministry?**

Most of the respondents listed compassion as the most important source of strength for meeting the needs of the homeless. One response that illustrated this view was by saying, "God has shown me by his grace that I could be homeless. So I have compassion to give the homeless people hope in Jesus." Another said:

It provides hope in desperate circumstances, clarity in a confused/chaotic world, sympathy and compassion to people many have hardened their hearts toward...By knowing Him I have a growing understanding of myself and the world around me.

Still another said, "Working with the homeless, needy and addicted requires discernment, patience, compassion, courage, and much more. These all come from Jesus and the only way to receive them is a strong relationship with Him."

Increased Appreciation and Identification with the Homeless

This discovery of an increased appreciation and identification with the poor came from the following question:

- **How has your relationship with God developed and changed as a result of working with the homeless? (For example - deeper faith or an increased appreciation for the poor).**

The majority of responses indicated that there often was a change of heart and attitude as a result of working with the homeless. One response that provided a good example of this finding is as follows:

Yes, I feel like a child again. I see God's hand in everything we do in our mission. We touch each other's lives. I can look for the good in each of us again. With so much hatred and distrust in the world, it's easy to isolate yourself and stop trusting and having faith. Those are the things and qualities we must share in order to have a true relationship with God!

The findings from the spiritual life surveys consistently revealed the priority of prayer as a primary spiritual discipline practiced by the leaders, Jesus as the primary biblical model of leadership, compassion as a source of strength for service and an increased appreciation and identification with the poor as a result of serving the homeless. . These findings gave broad insights into the spiritual leadership of those who serve God and the homeless.

The next section focuses on the executive directors of these homeless ministries by interviewing them to discover specifics of their spirituality.

Interview Data

The interviews were conducted in person and by phone. The interviews varied to some degree, but they all centered around two basic questions.

- **What are the biggest challenges you face in the homeless ministry?**

And, how has your faith helped you to meet the challenges of working with the homeless?

First, in this section of the data findings there were four primary challenges mentioned by the homeless ministry executive directors. They were the challenge of funding, the need for a calling to the mission, the challenge of ministry needs, and the need for community support.

The Challenge of Funding

This was the most mentioned challenge by the directors of these homeless ministries. Two director's comments represent this concern well:

Adequate financial resources are an ongoing concern. Hospitality House was founded by six churches in 1984, so churches are supportive. Approximately 60 percent of the funding comes from the local community, churches, business, and the United Way. The rest comes from grants.

This director stressed the need for community funding and warned to shy away from being too dependent on grants. The next comment was,

Funding is the biggest challenge for our mission. The Miracle Hill Network began with very charismatic leader in Greenville, South Carolina in the 1950's. The ministry grew by starting a Children's Home in 1958. By the 1960's the leader left and the mission had \$200,000 of debt.

The ministry was rebuilt by the leadership of the next director and the financial strength improved. However, funding for the ministry continues to be a great challenge.

The Need for a Calling to the Mission

The directors mentioned the need for one's own calling and the need to have board members, staff, and volunteers who felt a sense of calling to this work. Two directors illustrate these finding in their comments. One director said:

I have done this kind of work for twenty five years and have been the director for 10 years. It is extremely important to feel a sense of God's calling in this type of work.

The Sixth Chapter of Galatians spoke of bearing one another's burdens while at the same time carrying your own load. This director spoke of his calling as one that gave him courage and strength to do this work.

Another spoke of the need for a calling for his staff and volunteers. He said:

It is very important to believe that you have been called to this particular ministry. If you are not called to this kind of work it probably won't be too long before burn- out occurs. It is crucial to match people's gifts and personality with jobs for mission.

This leader knew from experience the need to experience the call for this work with the poor.

The Challenge of Ministry Needs

One of the greatest challenges faced by these leaders was the daily, sometimes overwhelming need of the people they encountered. One particular issue was the problem of the relapse of the individuals that they worked with as well. Two comments that capture this finding were:

The relapse of individuals is still a difficult issue. There continues to e great disappointment with staff when this occurs." This director through experience knew that this was to be expected in working with people suffering from addictions and mental illness.

Another comment on this finding was:

The biggest challenge is trying to be effective in changing lives with the good news of Jesus Christ. The people we deal with have tremendous strongholds. We desire to see Christ change their lives in a great way.

This director realized the spiritual battle that lay behind the problems he encountered with the people served.

The Need for Community Support

An ongoing concern and challenge mentioned in these interviews was the need to involve the community. This was not only for financial support but to dispel common stereotypes of the homeless. Two comments demonstrated this concern.

“Another challenge is educating the public on who the homeless really are. General stereotypes are prevalent which often results in indifference to the problem and the need for support and involvement.” This director’s response to the challenge was to take time to do programs in the community on educating the public on the truth about homelessness.

Another comment on this stream of data was:

“Getting the community to know who you are can be a great challenge. Often time’s people do not see or realize the breadth of who you are and what you do.” This director’s organization serves over 200,000 meals a year in their community and provides 50,000 nights of lodging, which is not a well know fact.

Interviewees

The directors were predominantly seasoned experienced homeless ministry leaders with an average length of service of 15 years. Six of the directors had 25- 30 years of experience and the other eight had served five to ten years in this capacity.

In the second part of this section there were three significant findings that addressed the following question,

- **How does your faith help you to meet the challenges you face?**

Responses were prayer as a source of help, the calling as a source of help, and scripture reading as a source of help.

Prayer as a Source of Help

Most of the interviews revealed men and women who are devoted to prayer. The need to be a prayer warrior was mentioned specifically by two directors. They said:

I am a prayer warrior. I do not know how you could do this work and be otherwise. We have daily prayer times and Chapel services on Sunday. We are a prayer- driven ministry. We are used to praying for funding and food and other resources necessary to carry on this ministry.

This leader not only practiced prayer on an individual basis but carried this priority to the mission he was a part of. Another comment on this finding was:

You must have a great dependence on the Lord and be committed to being a prayer warrior. There is a great emphasis on prayer in this work. Emphasis is placed on having a strong devotional life, and worship is shared with residents.

This director as well practiced the discipline of prayer and considered it a great means of help.

The Calling as a Source of Help

The calling from God was mentioned in both sections of these findings. It not only was a vital factor in meeting the challenges of the ministry but also a vital part of their spirituality that help to carry on the work. Two comments represented this finding.

Part of discerning this call was in knowing that the pulpit ministry was not for me. I have a different set of skills such as administration. I have sought to surround myself by four types of leaders; you need an inspiring leader, a visionary, an accountant, and a cheerleader.”

This leader knew the need for discerning God’s call to serve the homeless in a variety of leadership capacities. And again: God’s calling is crucial in not allowing one to be tempted to lower the bar or standard. “The homeless and addicted need to take responsibility for their actions and realize that addictions can be fatal.” This director’s calling was to speak the truth in love to those he served.

The Scriptures as a Source of Help

The priority of Bible reading was mentioned by several of the ministry leaders. Two comments addressed this finding. “Matthew 25 is the passage that guides me. This passage helps me to remember why I am here.” (The director was referring to the parable of the Sheep and the Goats that focuses on helping others in need.) This biblical foundation was a source of strength to the leadership of this director.

Another comment was: “The key to my involvement in this ministry was Disciple Bible Study. (a 34-week overview of the Bible) The emphasis in that study of using my gifts for ministry led me to explore involvement in this ministry.” This leader had experienced the scriptures as a source of help in obeying God’s call to use his gifts in ministry.

In summary, the surveys revealed four streams of data (findings). They were prayer as the most frequently practiced spiritual discipline, Jesus as the primary Biblical model for leadership, compassion as a source of strength to meeting the challenges of working with the homeless, and an increased identification and appreciation of the poor. The interpretation of the findings of these research surveys and interviews will be explored in Chapter Six, along with recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND FUTURE STUDIES

Searching for a Christian response to the problem of homelessness calls for spiritual leadership to come forward and respond. This thesis was birthed out of a failed homeless ministry and honest searching for a model of leadership that is effective in addressing the homeless problem in rural communities. The premise of the project was that an exploratory study of the spiritual leadership of seasoned and effective homeless ministry leaders in other communities in the South, and from the history of homeless ministry in the United States, would result in discovering leadership principals that are needed to effectively meet this need. The hope was that this would result in selecting the gifted spiritual leadership that is needed to begin and sustain this vital ministry. To mine this data four major research questions were explored. They were: How do leaders draw upon God for spiritual strength? What Biblical models and perspectives influence the practice of leadership to the homeless? How does spirituality and its practice help leaders deal with the many challenges of this type of work? And how does the leader's relationship with God develop and change as a result of his/her work with the homeless? From the data that was received and analyzed there were four major discoveries that emerged. They were: Prayer was the primary means of spiritual strength for these leaders; Jesus was the primary biblical model of leadership; Compassion was a means to meet the challenges of working with the homeless; increased appreciation and identification were

a result of working with the homeless. A comparison of the gender of homeless ministry workers did not indicate significant differences but did provide helpful insights.

Christian leaders in other communities are also struggling with their responses to the problem of homelessness, and four major findings gleaned from analyzing this project could prove beneficial to everyone. The director and the chair of the committee, along with the staff and board of directors should reflect on these six spiritual leadership characteristics.

1. Prayer is the primary source of spiritual strength.
2. Jesus is the primary Biblical model of leadership.
3. Compassion is the key to meeting the challenges of working with the homeless.
4. Increased appreciation and identification with the poor is a result of working with the homeless.

An analysis of each finding follows.

Data Stream #1 - Prayer is the Primary Source for Spiritual Strength

In examining the spiritual life surveys, it was very evident that prayer was the spiritual discipline that homeless ministry leaders turned to for spiritual strength. In response to the question, “What spiritual disciplines do you draw upon most frequently for spiritual strength,” more than 90% responded with the answer prayer. “Please elaborate on the three disciplines that give you the most strength” also had prayer listed for 82% of respondents. This data addressed the first research question: “How do leaders draw upon God for spiritual strength?” In analyzing the data, it was discovered that prayer affected spiritual strength in three primary ways. It was a source of renewing

strength, it provided a clear sense of calling to ministry, and it gave compassion for service.

Many of the survey responses commented on the renewing power and spiritual strength they received from practicing the spiritual discipline of prayer. One comment was, “Prayer is the life blood of the Christian, the sap that runs from the vine into the branches, (a reference to) John 15: 5 this is where we receive or do not receive strength from on high.” This aspect of prayer reminded one that a spiritual leader has the need to be renewed with the power of God’s spirit through prayer. The Director of Lifeline Outreach in Henderson, North Carolina had just returned from a four month sabbatical. She admitted that for too long she had neglected her family and had been too busy with work. Thanks to a financial grant, she was given a four month sabbatical. She spent one month with family, friends, and other relatives. The next three months she spent studying, praying, resting, and healing. This deep entering of Sabbath rest, of which prayer was a large part, was greatly renewing, and according to Harper, resulted in a spiritually renewed life. Dr. Gregory Frizzell’s work *Returning to Holiness and How to Develop a Powerful Prayer Life*, echoed the need for homeless ministry leaders to daily spend a significant time (30-45 minutes) in prayer.¹

Another comment from a survey was,

Every evening I take about an hour or so just to sit quietly on my balcony to think and pray and to talk with God. I used to think the time had to be outlined specifically, but now realize that I need to just let God take control. Sometimes I go on walks and just enjoy his beauty and his majesty.

¹ Gregory Frizzell, *Returning to Holiness, A Personal and Church Wide Journey to Revival* (Memphis: Master Design Ministries, 1999), 25.

This time of sitting on the balcony in prayer was reminiscent of the first movement of prayer in Richard Foster's book *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*. This movement seeks transformation and answers the invitation to fellowship with God.² Kenneth Boa's book *Conformed to His Image* has a section on the devotional facet of spiritual formation. It also asserts the need for prayer to be friendship with God.³

One respondent said "Prayer is strength for me- whether it's for someone specific or for everyone in general. I enjoy "soaking" people with prayer. It helps me to heal, too." Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane in Luke 22:42 "Not my will, but thy will be done" illustrated the spiritual strength that came from going to God in prayer. The Director of Lighthouse Ministries in Lakeland, Florida discovered the power of corporate and group prayer when her staff recently began to put more emphasis on praying together and less emphasis on business meetings. The result has been a spiritual strength and a stronger faith in trusting that God will provide financially for the mission. They have also gained a greater sense of team spirit in serving the poor and the homeless.

Another respondent said that "prayer must be your top priority." The director of the Haven of Rest Rescue Mission of Bristol, Tennessee, believed in private prayer and especially praying with the residents. His entire organization has put a great emphasis on prayer. This former hospital administrator has experienced the spiritual strength that comes as a result of prayer.

² Foster, Richard J., *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* (San Francisco: Harper, 1982), 5.

³ Boa, Kenneth, *Conformed to His Image* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001), 187.

Another benefit of prayer as a source of spiritual strength is a strong sense of God's calling upon one's life. A respondent from ABCCM believed strongly that God calls one to this ministry through prayer. When he was 18 he had a theophany. While in deep prayer, he had a vision of a stained glass window with hands holding the Bible. The next years were spent in a variety of ministry settings. He went to Bible college and would hitchhike across the country and stay in homeless shelters such as rescue missions and the Salvation Army to get a sense of how others served the poor. Upon graduation he became a campus minister because he knew he had not been called to the traditional pastorate. As he further examined his call from God, he felt one of the best ways to help families would be to help them with their personal issues and problems.

He received further training in marriage and family counseling and practiced in this field. He also spent some time serving as a church pastor due to financial necessity. He even managed a Good Will store for two years. Then his father, who had opposed his going into this kind of work, saw an ad in the Asheville, North Carolina newspaper. The Asheville Buncombe County Christian Ministries (ABCCM) was looking for a new director. It seemed that the requirements they were looking for were a perfect match for this young man. He felt it was ironic that God would use his father to help him discover God's call upon his life. He interviewed for the job and was hired.

A second theophany occurred in regard to his call to this ministry, when soon after his assuming this position; he was invited to speak to a small African American church in Asheville. This church was Hill Street Baptist Church. Standing in the pulpit he noticed a stain glass window which depicted God's hands holding the Bible. He was

overwhelmed when he realized that it was the same vision he had seen as an eighteen year old boy. He has now been the director of ABCCM for 25 years.

Homeless ministry leaders discover the sense of God's call upon their lives through prayer much as the biblical heroes of faith did. As an example Abram and Sarai received a call to leave their home. In Genesis they heard the call to "go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land I will show you. I will bless you and make your name great" (Genesis 12: 1-4). Queen Esther spent three days praying and fasting before she answered God's call to save her people. Her surrogate father, Mordecai, asked her, "and who knows that you have come into a royal position for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14)? This call to radical obedience is also seen in the life of Moses when he heard God's call in the wilderness to go and free the children of Israel. Abram and Sarai, Esther, and Moses had a clear sense of God's call through prayer (Exodus chapter 3).

The Director of the Raleigh Rescue Mission noted that if one was not called to this work it probably wouldn't be too long before 'burn-out' was a problem. He believed it was crucial to match people's gifts and personality with jobs for the mission. It was also important to identify jobs for people to grow into as they matured in their faith and skill level. Some did discover that this was God's calling for their lives and they stayed. Most others did not stay for longer than two years.

This receiving of God's call to serve him through prayer is definitely a strong characteristic of spiritual leadership. Reggie McNeal described this as "a work of heart."⁴

⁴ McNeal, Reggie, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 11.

This call is also received in the community of faith. The Room in the Inn ministry of First United Methodist Church of Lenoir, North Carolina was birthed in prayer at a planning retreat, as leaders focused on the question, “What is God calling us to do in 2006?” This ministry would be a direct contrast to the previously discussed Caldwell Men’s Homeless Shelter (February 2005- October 2005) that had such difficulty discerning God’s call to serve the homeless.

Henry Blackaby in *Experiencing God* summarized the process of hearing God’s call through prayer in three ways.

1. God creates in us the desire to participate in His mission to reconcile a lost world to Himself.
2. We respond and come to God seeking to know His will.
3. When God reveals a truth to us, we know He is trying to alert us to what He is doing in our lives.⁵

Homeless ministry leaders have also experienced prayer as a source of strength and a deepening compassion for service. One respondent had the insightful observation, “I’m anal retentive / fastidious, so serving people who stink, who have physical issues, and who are schemers is really good for me. It’s a reminder that I’m sinful too – and desperately in need of God’s grace like everyone else. Being in communion with the Holy Spirit through prayer is essential so that I can be reminded of God’s vision for people.”

⁵ Blackaby, Henry T. and Claude V. King, *Experiencing God: How to Live the Full Adventure of Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 173.

The connection between praying and receiving the strength to serve was present with the early Methodists. Charles Wesley referred to seeing the image of Christ in the poor as “gospel poverty.” Wesley adopted the medieval notion that believed that Christ and the early disciples were deliberately poor⁶. The parable of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25: 31-46 was a reminder of the need for compassion for these poor. In response to the question “When did we see thee Lord when we served the poor, the naked, those in prison and the sick?” Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.” Matthew 25:40.

Another respondent voiced the need for compassion with these words, “Many people are afraid of the homeless or won’t go near them because of their life-styles. They’re human beings just like everyone else – they have souls, too. Homeless need love, friends, kindness, and laughter just like we do, even more than others. Karl Barth’s concept of neighbor was a reminder that the strength of compassion that comes through prayer is rooted in the belief in the incarnation. Barth said, “The incarnation does not take place in a privileged sphere in something less than real humanity.”⁷ Barth, whose assertion was that neighbor was a criterion of Christ said, “We can not pick and choose those whom we would see Christ in, but rather be open to seeing Him in those He chooses.”⁸

⁶ Richard Heitzenrater, *The Poor and the People Called Methodist* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 40-41.

⁷ Ray Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 139.

⁸ Anderson, Ray S., *The Shape of Practical Theology* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 42-45.

The research consistently showed the need for leadership that addressed the problem of homelessness through the spiritual discipline of prayer. Directors especially need to emphasize the need for personal habits of prayer. They need to have staff members that are committed to prayer, as well as a Board of Directors that is committed to the same. The source of strength that empowers through the filling of the Holy Spirit, that affirms the calling to this ministry, and that gives greater faith as leaders experience God through obedience to that call is largely the result of a strong commitment to prayer.

Data #2 - Jesus as the Primary Biblical Model of Leadership

A second research question asked in this exploratory study of homeless ministries leaders lives was “What Biblical models and perspectives influence your practice of leadership?” More than 72% of the ministry leaders listed Jesus as the Biblical leader that influenced their leadership. Jesus was viewed as a leadership example, and a leadership strategist.

There were several interesting comments from the respondents. Two examples follow.

He is the one! Respectful. Loving, serving, reflective, sacrificial, courageous, redemptive. Jesus because He is always perfect, and true. He is our best role model.

And again:

Jesus- I am always in awe of the way Christ searched for and felt comfortable around the outcast and lost of this world. I often wonder how different the world would be if each of us who bear his name shared just a little bit more of his compassion for the lost.”

The director of Hospitality House in Boone, North Carolina cited Jesus as her guide for Biblical leadership saying-“Matthew 25 is my passage of scripture that guides me. The

parable of the sheep and goats that calls us to serve Christ through the poor, the hungry, the sick, and those in prison. Jesus as my guide helps to remind me of why I am here.

The servant leadership that was practiced by Jesus came primarily through his example. Jesus set the servant's example in John chapter 13, when he washed the feet of his disciples. His charge to them was "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." John 13:15 Jesus' example of courage, of loving, of compassion serves as an outstanding model for homeless ministry leaders. One leader had this response: "Jesus as our example in leadership points to his life as a servant, and consequently as a servant leader."

Ken Blanchard's leadership book *Lead like Jesus*, stated that the call to follow Jesus was also the call to be a servant leader. In Matthew 20, the Lord reminded his followers by saying,

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to be first must be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.⁹

Jesus was also looked to as a leader who excelled in care giving. One response that illustrated Jesus as a leader who excelled in serving was:

Jesus. I am always in awe of the way Christ searched for and felt comfortable around the outcast of the world. I often wonder how different the world would be if each of us who bear his name shared just a little bit more compassion for the lost (homeless).

⁹ Blanchard, Ken and Phil Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus* (Nashville: W. Publishing Group, 2005), 40.

Robert Greenleaf's *Servant Leadership* emphasized the need to be servants first and then leaders.¹⁰ Christ certainly embodied this by giving his life upon the cross for us. Jim Collins' *Good to Great* speaks of the level-five leader who is not overly concerned with his recognition or status, only that the mission is accomplished.¹¹ Both of these leadership theories were supportive and consistent with the leadership of Jesus. Jesus was looked to as the primary Biblical model of leadership because he is the ultimate moral and spiritual guide in leadership.

The need for honesty, integrity and sincere compassion was much cited by directors of homeless ministries. The present director of Miracle Hill Ministries recounted the story of how their ministry suffered greatly because of the mismanagement of funds by a previous director. Thankfully, their next director was a leader of great honesty and integrity that attracted the same moral leadership in his staff and Board of Directors.

Looking to Jesus as a Biblical model of leadership also revealed that homeless ministry leaders seek to adopt his strategies in ministry. When Jesus began his ministry (in Luke 4:18) he declared, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor." Jesus' love for the poor and outcasts resonated with Richard Niebuhr's category of Christ as Transformer of Society in his book *Christ and Culture*.¹²

¹⁰ Greenleaf, Robert, *Servant Leadership* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), --.

¹¹ Collins, Jim, *Good to Great* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), ---.

¹² Niebuhr, H. Richard, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951), -
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The director of ABCCM had good insights into Christian leadership and in particular servant leadership. He said,

Part of discerning this call was knowing that a pulpit ministry was not for me. I have a different set of skills, such as administration. I have sought to surround myself with four types of leaders. These are insights I received from a therapist. You need an inspiring leader, a visionary, an accountant, and a cheerleader.

His experience was that most pastors were not called to serve the homeless as directly as he did. "Their gifts are more suited to the local church pastoral care of counseling and hospital visitation." The director asserted that Jesus led in a similar fashion using ministry in small groups.

I oversee some 3,000 volunteers and I seek to teach my leadership small- group dynamics. The poor can be like a vacuum cleaner, in that they will suck the life out of you. It is best to use a team approach in helping the poor.

The early Methodists also followed Jesus' example of leadership in making disciples through small groups. D. Michael Henderson writing in his book *John Wesley's Class Meeting* wrote:

John Wesley created an instructional system which brought about a national spiritual renewal in eighteenth-century England. His techniques for nurturing and training Christian disciples not only brought personal transformation to tens of thousands of individual working-class believers, but a moral reformation to the nation. The heart of this revolutionary system was a cell group of six to eight people which Wesley named 'the class meeting.' They met weekly to give an account of their personal spiritual growth, according to the rules and following the procedures which Wesley carefully crafted."¹³

The class meeting proved to be a vital means of spiritual transformation. Jesus as the Biblical model of leadership revealed the need to study His life and ministry and to incorporate those leadership principals and strategies in today's ministries with the

¹³ Henderson, D. Michael, *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciplines* (Nappanee, Indiana: Francis Asbury of Evangel Publishing House, 1997), 11.

homeless. Wesley was following the example of Jesus who spent so much time discipling twelve men.

Charles Marciano of the Charlotte Rescue Mission believed in a clinical model that helped and served people without encouraging a codependent relationship. He said that “too often we have lowered the bar for the homeless and think we are doing the loving thing. This is a mistake. We need to resist the need to be like Mighty Mouse ‘who has come to save the day’”. When Jesus called the rich young ruler to come and follow him, he did not. Christ did not change his appeal because the young man did not come. He willingly let him walk away. The homeless must be told that their treatment strategy is pass / fail. Addictions are ultimately fatal and they must be taken seriously with God’s help.

With so much being written about leadership today, the project’s research showed that these leaders knew that they were first and foremost disciples of Jesus Christ. They recognized that following His example would mean being a servant leader (e.g. Christ washing the feet of His disciples). The theological framework for the practice of the spiritual discipline of service and spiritual leadership was affirmed. Following Jesus had the result of a spiritual leader that was not only committed to Christ’s example as a man of prayer, but as servant as well. These leaders were effective because they looked to Jesus as their example for spiritual leadership. Their goal was faithfulness and they understood the need to take up their cross and follow Jesus. The leadership theory of Jim Collins *Good to Great* “level 5 leaders”¹⁴ and Robert Greenleaf’s “servant leader”

¹⁴ Collins, Jim, *Good to Great* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001).

supported Jesus as the best leadership model.¹⁵ Jesus was the primary Biblical model of leadership that the homeless ministry leaders looked to for example as well as for methodology of ministry.

Data Stream #3 - Compassion as the Key to Meeting the Challenges of Working with the Homeless

The third question was asked was: “How does your spirituality and its practice help you to meet the many challenges of this type of work?” In analyzing the data the responses could be divided into two groups, compassion for the homeless as persons and compassion for the difficult problems they encounter.

Some of the comments that revealed the compassion of homeless ministry leaders were: “definitely deepening compassion. I had a completely different view of the homeless before working with them. That view has since changed and it is the compassion of Christ and the love he showed others that has helped,” and “I am motivated with courage to pray with them, and to have a deeper compassion and love for them. I hope they feel the care I try to show them.”

Richard Foster spoke of compassion in *Streams of Living Water*.¹⁶ In describing the social justice tradition of Christianity, one of the great themes from the Old Testament was ‘hesed’. Foster wrote, “Sprinkled throughout the Hebrew Scriptures are grace-filled laws of compassion, of hesed. The law of gleaning detailed in the book of

¹⁵ Greenleaf, Robert, *Servant Leadership* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977).

¹⁶ Foster, Richard J., *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1998), 170.

Leviticus is a good example of hesed.”¹⁷ The Israelites were trying to encourage the golden rule that people should treat others in the same manner that they would like to be treated. The Israelites had compassion for those that were hungry.

The director of Hospitality House, described her staff as young and inexperienced but with “hearts of compassion”. Most served very effectively. The director of LifeLine Outreach in Henderson, North Carolina simply said, “It takes a lot of compassion to do this work.” She was in the process of writing a book about her 25 years in this ministry and said she had done a lot of weeping as she recalled all the lives that God had changed through their ministry.

This compassion was also seen in the saints that so faithfully practiced the spiritual discipline of service. St. Francis of Assisi has been remembered as one who loved the poorest of the poor, as was Mother Teresa. James Howell reminded his readers of the price to be paid when they began to identify with the poor. There were three common themes of servant hood were means of viewing the homeless as persons with compassion. They were:

1. If one is going to serve one must be prepared to give up something precious.
2. Service requires genuine solidarity with those in need.
3. Throughout history the saints have consistently seen Christ in the poor and the hurting.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Howell, James C., *Servants, Misfits, and Martyrs: Saints and Their Stories* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1999), --.

Other comments and data also cited compassion as a key to meeting the challenges but seemed to have a little different emphasis. This compassion seemed to focus more on the homeless as a group instead of the homeless as persons. One comment was:

Keeping God's word in my heart allows me the opportunity to greet new people in a compassionate and caring way. It is sometimes hard for me to meet new folks and not 'pull in to myself' I don't do that with our guests. I know they need a listening heart and a compassionate word. Not just meals and warmth.

This volunteer from the Room in the Inn ministry was moved with compassion as she experienced the problem of homelessness, and as she spent time with people that have nowhere to go. In Jeremy Reynolds' book *Homeless in America – The Solution*, he states that charity workers in the last century were more compassionate. He quoted Marvin Olasky as saying, "Poverty workers one hundred years ago were more compassionate in the literal sense of "suffering with" than many of us now."¹⁹ The compassion of these workers led them to invite the homeless to stay with them, but also expected something out of them. They always desired for the homeless to find solutions to their problems and for them not to be chronically in need.

Those that have been homeless have a special compassion for this problem. The director of Urban Ministries in Durham liked to have employees who had actually been homeless. Some of his former residents have come back to work at UMOD. However, this practice had a downside which was that sometimes the formerly homeless let their new authority make them too "bossy." At one shelter two directors had actually been homeless and one had actually been a resident of the shelter. When the first staff member

¹⁹ Reynolds, Jeremy, *Homeless in America: The Solution* (Lafayette, Louisiana: Huntington House, 1994), 51.

quit two weeks after the ministry began, the second one volunteered to lead without pay to keep the shelter open. This ‘director’ had a tendency to be bossy and abrasive to the other occupants, and this caused some friction among them.

The facility eventually closed for several reasons. On the surface, there was a lack of funding, a lack of qualified staff, and a lack of permanent housing. However, the deeper root was that board members were not convinced that homelessness was that great of a problem in the community. Most had some concern for the homeless, but also had issues that they brought to the table that they were not willing to commit to God’s care. Jesus’ example as compassionate servant leader was not their main focus. The ministries that exist today for the homeless in this community today are led by people who do have that have great compassion.

The early Methodists were very effective in serving the poor with compassion. Theologically John Wesley’s guiding principal was the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) “So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the prophets.” Dr. Richard Heitzenrater in *The Poor and the People Called Methodists* wrote:

A particularly relevant example is compassion. The fact that we argue over whether compassion is more an emotion (something we suffer) or more a disposition (something over which we have control) reflects awareness that one is not likely to develop compassion without undergoing specific experiences. We must usually experience some type of hardship ourselves to be able to identify with the hardships of others. But we must experience true suffering or neediness on the part of the other. This means it is not enough to send our money dutifully in response to reports of need. Authentic compassion can only take form through sincere encounters with those in need. This is why Wesley emphasized the need to visit the poor and the sick even more than to offer them aid. He recognized the

failure to visit was a major contributing cause of the lack of compassion that lay behind withholding aid.²⁰

Catherine Booth of the Salvation Army realized on the way to Sunday evening services that there were many people hanging out on the streets that were greatly in need of the Savior. One visit to a home of a woman and her drunken husband, led to a ministry of evangelical outreach and social compassion. One professor of criminology spoke of the change that compassion had made in her life.

I have become far more compassionate. Homelessness is not what it seems. This runs far deeper than shabby clothes. I understand this problem not only academically but spiritually as well. I know that God loves these people. I know this because I have been privileged to see the miracles He has wrought in their lives. Because of this He has given many of them the most beautiful testimonies, unlike any others I have heard. Talk about the voices of angels, just talk to a blessed person who has no material wealth but is rich in spirit.

Compassion as a response to the problem of homelessness was life changing, and was the key to meeting the challenges of working with the homeless. It was a source of spiritual strength to homeless ministry leaders as they had compassion for the homeless as human beings created in God's image. It enabled them to be genuinely concerned in helping them with their problems. Much like the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37, they responded to the hurting with compassion and viewed the suffering as people. They were willing to embrace the homeless and share the pain of their problems.

The leaders of the various ministries grew in deepening compassion as they participated in this ministry. Volunteers especially commented on this as they saw their preconceived stereotypes of the homeless begin to dissipate. The concept of "seeing Christ's image in the poor" that was taught in medieval times, practiced by the early

²⁰ Heitzenrater, Richard P., *The Poor and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2002), 77.

Methodists, and saints through the ages such as St. Francis of Assisi and Mother Teresa was alive today. When eyes of faith were opened to the fact that the homeless are God's children too, greater reserves of compassion were available to serve them..

Data Stream #4 - Increased Appreciation and Identification with the Poor as a Result of Working with the Homeless

The fourth research question for this project was "How has your relationship with God developed and changed as a result of working with the homeless? Homeless ministry leaders often cited the greatest change in their life as a result of working with the homeless was a greater appreciation and identification with the poor. The increased appreciation of the poor noted by homeless ministry leaders came as a result of what has been called seeing the image of Christ in the poor. The large group of Christians that gathered in July of 2004 in Lenoir, North Carolina came as a result of knowing the Biblical mandate to serve the poor, the hungry, the sick, and those who are in prison, As a result of these meetings a homeless shelter was begun that operated for eight months and served over 100 men.

Seeing the image of Christ in the poor was a concept that first came from the Bible. In Matthew 25: 31- 46 the parable of the sheep and the goats ended with the King responding to the acts of compassion of his servants, "The king will reply, I tell you the truth, whenever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me. " Matthew 25: 40. Mother Teresa wrote to a group of supporters and said, "If we want the poor people to see Christ in us, we have to see the image of Christ in the poor."²¹ Mother

²¹ Heitzenrater, Richard P., *The Poor and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2002), 39.

Teresa was enunciating a long-standing theme in Christian devotion. The concept of “gospel poverty” (also known as “apostolic poverty”), was a medieval notion that believed that Christ and the first apostles were deliberately poor.

One of the respondents indicated that ‘seeing the image of Christ in the poor, was still taking place today:

I am much closer to God. Each time I do anything at all with RITI, I realize “there but by the grace of God go I” and I know that it could be any of us in that situation. God has taught me the preciousness of a warm smile and loving care. My 2 children help with RITI. My daughter, age 9, has been asking many questions to understand more. My son 5 is concerned that they all don’t have hats or homes to keep them warm. They both get mad at me if I do not take them with me every Saturday! It’s good to have them learning not to be afraid of homeless people and that it is God’s way to help them as well as others.

This volunteer and her family were seeing the image of Christ in the poor and were moved with compassion to respond. Another homeless ministry leader expressed her appreciation for working with the homeless.

Working with the homeless has brought me closer to God because I believe it is what he wants me to do. God has blessed me more than I deserve and I want/ need to share these blessings. Furthermore, the homeless often show caring for each other that is an incredible example for many of us. It gets me away from our materialistic thinking.

One result of working with the poor was the decision to embrace poverty voluntarily. Thomas of Celano describes St. Francis’ conversion:

The holy Francis, hearing the disciples of Christ should not possess gold or silver or money; nor carry along the way scrip, or wallet, or bread, or a staff, that they should not have shoes, or two tunics; but that should preach the kingdom of God and penance, immediately cried out exultingly: This is what I wish, this is what I seek, this is what I long to do with all my heart.²²

²² Heitzenrater, Richard P., *The Poor and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2002), 43.

The homeless ministry leaders also had grown in their identification with the poor, as a result of working with them. Three shelter directors spoke directly of the need to educate their communities about who the homeless really were and why that they were homeless. The public's perception was that the homeless were basically lazy and therefore homelessness still exists much as it did in 19th century America. William Booth's work "In Darkest England" pleaded for the poorest ten percent of England's population that were largely ignored at that time. Booth's upbringing was one of poverty so he could identify with poor and was sympathetic to their plight.

One volunteer expressed her identification with the poor as a result of having visited them:

I am continually amazed by the reality of a God who can change any life no matter how hopeless it might appear. Homeless ministry has challenged me to allow God's Word to become flesh... and that has increased my trust and dependence on God. I have a growing understanding of myself and the world around me.

This volunteer was expressing the change that happens in a leader's life as they begin to identify with the homeless.

Randy Maddox wrote in *The Poor and the People Called Methodists* that

Wesley considered providing such things as subsidized boarding schools for children of the poor, free health clinics, and a carefully collected set of inexpensive medical remedies (his Primitive Physick) to be an integral part of the mission of Methodism."²³

²³ Heitzenrater, Richard P., *The Poor and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2002), 68.

Wesley had known poverty as a boy and his own father had spent some time in prison for his debts. Wesley could identify with the poor.

One volunteer spoke of the change that had occurred in her life:

Oh, my goodness! Humility is deeper. When I observe volunteers and homeless neighbors working (and playing!) together. Action – Witness becomes very real in this work – doing is being a Believer! And God seems to want us to be in Community in every aspect of our faith journeys... because He blesses us so beautifully in the doing of it!

This identification with homeless families has stretched her faith and enlarged her sense of the community of faith.

Another volunteer knew from experience the plight of homeless.

I was once a homeless child of God. The more I seek him, and let go of everything, he comes, shows up and shows me who I really am/ I am in awe of his beauty, his love, and redeeming graces.

The leaders' direct involvement with the poor and the homeless gave them a greater appreciation and identification with the poor and the homeless. The early Methodists were insistent that their class meetings involved not only Bible study and prayer, but visiting the poor as well. Catherine and William Booth also modeled this example as well as they birthed the Salvation Army. The leaders enjoyed sharing stories of people whose lives had been changed and inspired them to continue in this ministry.

Much of the success of these homeless ministry leaders came from treating the poor with dignity and respect. This was also reflected in the literature review by the examples of the Booths and John Wesley. This appreciation and identification with the homeless was a vital part of effective spiritual leadership with the homeless.

Gender Specific Comparison of Leadership and Spirituality

Four major data streams were generated from the surveys researching the spirituality of the homeless ministry leaders. These were prayer as the primary source of strength, Jesus as the favorite Biblical model of leadership, deeper compassion to meet the challenges of homeless ministry, and greater appreciation and identification with the poor as a result of working with the homeless. A secondary stream was discovered as well. This minor stream was the difference between men's and women's spirituality. There were 13 women and 37 men who responded. Some common observations of both genders were:

1. Prayer was the primary spiritual discipline that leaders turned to for strength.
2. Jesus was the primary Biblical model of leadership.

Differences were found when by examining the top four spiritual disciplines. The spiritual disciplines cited most often by women in order of importance were prayer, worship, meditation and service. For men it was prayer, study, service, and worship. This revealed a different overall emphasis. Women tended to be a bit more devotional in their spirituality and men tended to be more service oriented. Even though this spiritual discipline was not listed as the highest source of strength, when a comparison of the gender of the leaders was made it became obvious it was in the top four listed by both. Both groups indicated that effective spiritual leadership needed prayer to help them address the problem of homelessness. Prayer kept them devotionally centered and strengthened, but also helped them put faith into action as servants of Jesus Christ. The early Methodists, the Franciscans, the Sisters of Charity, and the Salvation Army were all groups that blended genuine piety and works of mercy as well.

Another difference was seen in leadership models. Both genders listed Jesus as their highest leadership model, but differed on their second highest. The second highest model for women was Esther and the second highest model for men was Paul. Only one woman listed Paul as a model and only one man listed Esther as a model.

Among the directors that were interviewed, eleven were men and three were women. Their spirituality differences were much the same as the other respondents. The interviews did seem to indicate that women were more successful in creating a team approach to leadership, whereas men tended to use a top down chain of command. All seemed to possess excellent leadership skills, had strong people skills, and had social work skills. All still possessed a passion to serve the homeless, and were men and women of genuine Christian faith. The common thread within both genders was a clear sense of mission and calling to the mission as a result of obeying God's Will.

Future Studies & Conclusion

Future studies on the spiritual leadership needed for beginning a homeless ministry in a small, southern town could focus more in depth on the prayer lives of these leaders. They could also further explore the use of Jesus as a Biblical model of leadership. A study of the early Methodists and John Wesley's work among the poor would also be an excellent study about spiritual leadership.

It was a daunting task to bridge connections between three areas so broad in scope: the problem of homeless, spiritual formation, and leadership theory. What emerged was that spiritual leaders who are effective in serving the poor are willing to do their homework and seek to understand the nature of the problem they are addressing. They are also willing to learn from others who work with or have worked with the poor, and

are willing to get directly involved. These leaders put a high priority on spiritual formation, knowing that Christ is their true source of strength. Finally they study leadership theory and learn to develop their God given leadership skills to touch and transform others lives with God's love. One survey said it very well, "I help the homeless for simple reasons. I have a home and they do not. The Golden Rule (do unto others as you would have them do unto you – Matthew 7: 12) is the reason I help them."

Sitting at a stop light on a cold winter night, the seeds of this project were sown. The Lord reminded me through prayer that though I was on my home to a heated brick home, some of His children would be sleeping under the bridge I had just crossed. "I would like you to help them," He said. As I began to heed that call I discovered that responding to the problem of homeless with Christian faith and spiritual leadership could be difficult and frustrating. I discovered that it was acceptable for Christians to suffer failure along the way as long as we learn from the mistakes that caused it. What is not okay is to ignore our neighbors, the homeless, whom God loves. He gave His Son to die on the cross for all of us, not just a select few. We are called to love our neighbors, and with His help we can and we will.

APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTION OF HOMELESS MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS

Urban Ministries of Durham, Inc. is located in Durham, North Carolina. Their mission is to provide food, clothing, shelter and hope to neighbors in need. Their vision is to be a faith-based service organization that strives for excellence in serving the emergency needs of the poor, to share religious principles, and to strive to create a welcoming, compassionate environment that affirms the dignity of all, (Urban Ministries 1). The town of Durham, North Carolina has a population of 204,845 and Durham County's population is 245,582, (North Carolina State Data Center 1).

The Raleigh Rescue Mission was founded in 1961 to minister to the growing homeless population of hurting men, women, and children in their community. Their mission is to share Christ's love with people in need, and to help them transform their lives. The mission provides safe housing, clothing, and three healthy meals a day. They also provide recovery, Christian counseling, and other means of support to help clients make a successful transition to their community, (Raleigh Rescue Mission 1). The Raleigh Rescue Mission is located in Raleigh, North Carolina which has a population of 316,802 and Wake County has a population of 627,000, (North Carolina State Data Center 1).

The Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry is located in Asheville,

North Carolina. Their mission is “serving one another in the name of Christ.”

Founded in 1969, the mission serves the community through their crisis ministry, shelter ministry, medical ministry, and prison/jail ministry, (Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry 1). The town of Asheville has a population of 69,045 and Buncombe County’s population is 206,330, (North Carolina State Data Center 1).

The Catherine Barber Memorial Shelter was founded in 1987 in North Wilkesboro,

North Carolina. The shelter is named for Mrs. Barber who had a reputation for helping the poor and the needy in her community. The shelter is not a faith-based mission. The shelter is an over-night shelter that provides supper and breakfast.

Residents are required to look for work during the day and may stay up to two weeks, (Catherine Barber Shelter brochure 1). North Wilkesboro has a population of 4,135 and Wilkes County has a population of 65,432 (North Carolina State Data Center 1).

The Western Carolina Rescue Mission is located in Asheville, North Carolina, and

has been in operation since 1979. The mission provides, “Rescue, Recovery, and Restoration in Jesus’ name.” They do this by providing basic human needs of food, shelter, clothing, and food-boxes. They also offer drug and alcohol addiction counseling and services for mental health, they also seek to preserve families and restore broken families. They accommodate 34 men and nine women

in their shelter, provide 270 + meals, and distribute 225-250 food boxes monthly, (Western Carolina Rescue Mission 1).

The Charlotte Rescue Mission, founded in 1938, has a long history of reaching out to the homeless and those battling addictions. Today, the mission provides intensive drug and alcohol recovery programs to homeless or about to become homeless men and women. Their goal is to address the spiritual, mental, physical, emotional, social, and vocational issues of addiction with each person and return them as contributing members of society, (Charlotte Rescue Mission 1). The population of Charlotte, North Carolina is 584, 658 and Mecklenburg County's population in 695,454, (North Carolina State Data Center 1)

The Room in the Inn Ministry is part of The Urban Ministry of Charlotte, North Carolina. Since 1996, the Urban Ministry Center has been working with congregations of many faiths and colleges to open their facilities on average one night a week to provide shelter and food for the homeless during the winter months. Each site offers a warm, safe place to sleep and serves two meals (dinner and breakfast) and returns neighbors to the Charlotte Transportation Center the following morning. The greater goal is to provide a loving relationship to the homeless, at least for a night. Today, over 90 congregations and colleges provide more than 14,000 beds for over 900 neighbors and involve 5000 volunteers, (Urban Ministry of Charlotte 1).

The Salvation Army Shelter of Hickory, North Carolina is located in a town with a population of 39,476 and in Catawba County with a population of 141, 685, (North Carolina State Data Center 1). The Army seeks to provide food to needy families and individuals in Catawba and Alexander County every three months. The Army also seeks to provide clothing to families and individuals throughout the year on a seasonal or special event basis, in a way that conveys dignity and worth rather than dependency. They also operate an over-night shelter and a boy's and girls' club. (Salvation Army –Hickory, North Carolina brochure 1).

Miracle Hill Rescue Mission-Cherokee County Services was founded in 2000 in Gaffney, South Carolina. The mission has chapel services, tutoring, job skills raining, meals served, an emergency shelter for men, and an emergency shelter for women and families (Miracle Hill 1). Gaffney has a population of 12,968 and is located in Cherokee County with a population of 52, 537, (Census Online – South Carolina 1).

Lighthouse Ministries, Inc. was founded in 1977 in a former liquor store in downtown Lakeland, Florida. Today, Lighthouse serves, on an annual basis, 109,981 meals, daily housing for 90 residents, and 3,446 hours of education. Lighthouse also has a thrift store and a community preschool, (Lighthouse Ministries 1). Lakeland's population of 87,000 is located in Polk County, whose population is 485,924, (Census 2000 Data for the State of Florida 1).

Hospitality House of Boone, North Carolina was founded in 1985, and has sheltered more than 8,000 adults and family members since its beginning. The mission has expanded to having not only an emergency shelter, but also a transition program, and a permanent housing program that helps to fulfill their mission, “to help people to get back on their feet,” (Hospitality House brochure 1). The town of Boone has a population of 14,122 and doubles when the college Appalachian State University is in session. Boone is located in Watauga County, whose population 65,632, (North Carolina State Data Center 1).

The Dale County Rescue Mission is located in Ozark, Alabama, and has been in operation since 1983. The mission provides chapel services, meals, a community food pantry, thrift store, jail bible studies, an emergency shelter for men & women, a long-term recovery/ rehab program for men & women, a transitional housing program for men and women, and a furniture bank, (The Association of Gospel Rescue Missions 1). The population of Ozark is 15,000 and it is located in Dale County whose population is 49,129, (United States Census Bureau – Alabama 1).

The Haven of Rest Rescue Mission of Bristol, Inc. was founded in 1955 in Bristol, Tennessee. The mission has chapel services, meals served, a community food pantry, an emergency shelter, and an emergency shelter for women, and a community neighborhood outreach, (The Association of Gospel

Rescue Missions 1). Bristol has a population of 24,821 and is located in Sullivan County with a population of 153,048,

Lifeline Outreach is located in Henderson, NC. It is a homeless shelter dedicated to women with addictions and their children. It has been in operation since 1992. Henderson is a town of 16,095 located in Henderson County (population 97,000).

APPENDIX B

RESULTS OF THE SURVEYS

From the 14 ministry organizations, 45 Spiritual Life Surveys were returned with the following results:

***What spiritual disciplines do you draw upon most frequently for spiritual strength? (Please place a check mark next to the disciplines you practice regularly.)**

Meditation - 26

Prayer - 45

Fasting - 6

Study - 27

Simplicity - 8

Solitude - 11

Submission - 13

Service – 28

Confession - 16

Worship - 32

Guidance – 19

Celebration – 15

***Please elaborate on the three disciplines that give you the most strength.**

The top three disciplines listed were:

Prayer - 41

Meditation- 22

Worship - 22

***The following disciplines were listed as the top three for others:**

Service - 12

Study - 8

Submission - 6

Guidance - 6

Confession - 5

Celebration - 5

Solitude - 4

Simplicity - 2

Fasting - 1

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